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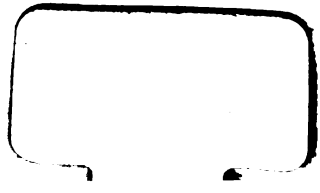

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MEMOIRS
OF
ALEXANDER BETHUNE,
EMBRACING
SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE
AND
LITERARY REMAINS,
COMPILED AND EDITED
BY
WILLIAM M'COMBIE,
AUTHOR OF "HOURS OF THOUGHT," "MORAL AGENCY," &c.

ABERDEEN:
GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, 28, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
1845.

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PREFACE.

THE occasion of my connexion with this volume, will appear from the following extract from an unfinished note in Mr. Bethune's handwriting, which I received a few days before his death:—

'I almost wish I could * * * * * have seen yourself, though it had been for never so short a time. There are many manuscripts which I should fearlessly put into your hand which otherwise I must burn indiscriminately, not choosing to leave them to the criticism of others.'

On my arrival at Mountpleasant, my friend, who was then in a very weak state, attempted to make a selection from his papers, of such as he had wish to have preserved; but perceiving him quite unfit for the excitement and exertion attendant on this, and fearing that he might destroy not a few

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which might contribute, one way or other, to illustrate his mental character and history, I succeeded in persuading him to consign the whole into my hands, assuring him that it would be my earnest endeavour to fulfil, to the utmost of my power, what I might conceive to be his wishes concerning them.

Of my attempt to perform the duty thus devolving on me, this volume is the result. The materials for it have been derived chiefly from his correspondence, from unpublished pieces in verse, and from such information respecting him, as his friends could supply.

To his correspondents, who have, so far as applied to, with one or two exceptions, kindly furnished me with the use of his letters or with copies, I owe, and now beg to tender, my best thanks. Through their kindness, I have been enabled to present a considerable amount of what I am led to anticipate will be found interesting autobiography; which I have always used in preference to narration of my own, both as more intrinsically valuable, and as likely to be more acceptable to the reader.

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My labour in regard to the letters imbodied in this volume, has been chiefly that connected with selection and arrangement. Correction, as to the composition, they have needed almost none. I do not know if a dozen alterations of this kind have been made in the whole series.

As to the selections from his Poetical Remains the case has been somewhat different. Few of them seem to have undergone that repeated and severe revision which this sort of composition peculiarly demands. In the want of this, however, I have resorted more to excision, than to alteration with a view to correction; and what I have attempted in this latter way, I contemplate with as little satisfaction as any part of my labours. I at first thought of printing such alterations in italics or within brackets, but a distaste for the patched and barbarous appearance it would have presented in some places deterred me from this. The parts so altered, however, are but few, and the reader accustomed to distinguish styles of writing will be very likely to detect most of them.

That the volume will be found chargeable with con-

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siderable imperfections, as to arrangement and continuity is what the editor is led to apprehend, from having been altogether unaccustomed to the sort of literary labour such compilations involve. But his hopes of its acceptableness rest chiefly on the intrinsic interest of its materials, as illustrative of the mental history, the struggles, and the literary achievements of the very remarkable man whose story it is meant to unfold.

CAIRNBALLOCH, *December*, 1844.

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LIFE AND REMAINS

OF

ALEXANDER BETHUNE.

CHAPTER I.

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD—DEVELOPMENT OF MIND AND LITERARY TASTES, AS TRACED BY HIMSELF IN EXTRACT FROM 'DAY DREAMS'—LETTER FROM MR. ADAMSON—AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LETTER FROM A. BETHUNE, TO MR. CHAMBERS—FIRST CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHAMBERS' JOURNAL—EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO A LADY.

Alexander Bethune,* the subject of this memoir, was born at Upper Rankeillour, in the parish of Letham, and county of Fife, towards the end of the month of July, 1804. The exact day has not been ascertained. His parents were both servants, previous to their marriage and his father appears to have wrought in that capacity for a considerable time after that event, as he is spoken of in the life

* In some of his earlier letters, the name is written Beaton, but Bethune is the orthography uniformly adopted after the publication of 'Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry.'

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of John, as having been a servant at the time of his birth, which was in 1811. They seem to have had always to struggle with poverty, but were distinguished for their sobriety and general excellence of character. Scotland, we fear, has got more credit than she deserves, for the high character of her peasantry; but in them certainly that character was strikingly displayed. The mother of the Bethunes, in particular, was a woman of superior mind. Her maiden name was Alison Christie. She was the daughter of Annie M'Donald, so distinguished for her piety and self-culture; a memoir of whom was given to the public several years ago, by the Rev. Mr. Brodie, then parochial minister of Monimail; and another, in a cheaper form, written by her grandson, John Bethune, and accompanied with extracts from her letters, was published by Alexander, in 1842. The following sketch of the character of Alison Christie has been furnished me by a lady, in whose father's house she long served. 'She was exceedingly fond of reading, and had a good voice and ear; and I well remember sitting on her knee, many an evening, while she was spinning, listening to "Sir James the Rose," "Babes of the Wood," "Chevy Chase," and some of Hamilton's songs which I still remember. * * * She had deep religious impressions, and a great abhorrence of wickedness, particularly deceit and ingratitude, combined with great independence of character, which I think helped to give the strong

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bent to the minds of the youths, particularly Alexander; while her benevolence and sympathy for others, in whatever shape their sufferings appeared, led to a faulty generosity that helped to keep them poor,—listening to every tale of woe, and helping others, when her own family had more need.' My friend gives an instance of this, equally characteristic of the subject of the following memoir, as of his mother:—'A neighbour had fallen behind in the world, and the mother of the family had been making her lamentation, that if money was not forthcoming that night, their cow would be taken away next morning. Alexander had four pounds which he had meant to get clothes with, but when he heard this tale of woe, he instantly took the money, and ran through the fields with it to the woman. Aily (his mother) said to me, she looked after him with more pride and joy, than if the king had made him a lord.' When remonstrated with on her excess of liberality, and told that she should remember her frail husband, she replied, in the words of scripture, 'Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' It is a weakness, characteristic of not a few of the finer order of minds, that they are in danger of yielding too much to sympathy for others; and such appears to have been the case with Mrs. Bethune,—in the excess of her generosity, forgetting the claims of her own house-

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hold. Nor does she appear to have excelled in her domestic economy, but to have been rather defective in that neatness and promptitude which contribute so much to the comfort of a family. In the infancy of the sons, the household owed much to the provident attentions of Mrs. Bethune's sister, who yet survives, and who so sedulously watched over Alexander during his last illness. The virtues of Mrs. Bethune, however, appear to have had a striking adaptation to the circumstances of her family. They were always poor, and the education of the sons was almost entirely domestic. Alexander, if we except a short time he attended an evening class, taught by Mr. Adamson, after he was two or three-and-twenty, was never more than four or five months at school; and John, as the reader will find recorded in his life, but one day. A mother of such endowments and virtues is an inestimable blessing in any case, but more emphatically so, when, as in the present instance, almost the whole mental as well as moral training falls to her hand. A testimony to her mental and moral excellence, quite as high as that I have just adduced, the reader will find below, in a communication from a gentleman who knew her well, and was well qualified to judge. This remarkable woman adds another instance to the many already on record, that the precursors of distinguished genius and talent generally appear on the maternal side.

During Alexander's infancy and childhood, ow-

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ing to his father's being a servant, the famil
to hav[illegible] had frequently to move from place t
When he was about seven or eight years
and, s[illegible]hortly after the birth of his broth
they c[illegible]ame to Woodmill, in the parish o
and o[illegible] the borders of 'that little lake,'
which [illegible]reat part of his own, as well as of
ther's [illegible]life was passed, and which, with
roundi[illegible]g scenery he has described with
beauty[illegible] and felicity in the opening of 'T
nanter[illegible]s Grave.'* 'In the parish of A
almost[illegible] immediately under the church-ya
lies th[illegible] little loch of Lindores, which in
twiligh[illegible]t of a summer's evening, appears
eye of nature looking up to its Maker in t
of mee[illegible]k and quiet devotion.' At Martinm
they re[illegible]moved to a place about a quarter
further[illegible] north, called Lochend, where they
to resi[illegible]de till 1837. The earliest notice of
ings a[illegible]nd occupations of his boyhood, I
with, i[illegible] in a paragraph near the beginn
M. S. m[illegible]arked 'Original Sketch of the Life
Bethun[illegible]e.' Though not inserted in the
memoir[illegible], I think it will not be uninteresti
reader.

'During the summer of 1815, my father
ployed in clearing the furze, or *whins*, fro
of ground about to be improved on a n

* Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasa

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ing eminence, called the *Cowden-hill.* It was then my task to carry his dinner; and, as the times were hard, and he did his work at so much per acre, I always wrought along with him in the afternoon. In these daily expeditions, I sometimes persuaded my little brother to accompany me, who was then between three and four years of age. While my father was eating his dinner, I used to take him to a point of the hill, from which the river Tay and part of the village of Newburgh were to be seen; and here again, the broad expanse of water, now bright with sunshine or dark with the shadow of the clouds, according to the state of the weather, with the ships, and the rocks by which the prospect was bounded, were a perfect romance to his childish eye. He seemed never to tire in gazing at them, he had innumerable enquiries concerning them to make; and it was only by threatening to leave him alone, that I could get him to accompany me back to the place where I was to work for the remainder of the day.

'These views of the shipping on the river, together with the boat on the loch, which we were sometimes permitted to examine, gave him a sort of taste for maritime affairs. Our spare time was now devoted to constructing boats from such pieces of wood as fell in our way. But, to complete that imitation which we wished to carry to perfection, tar or pitch was a desideratum which we could never obtain.'

We see here early manifestation of what proved

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to be strong tendencies in the minds of both the brothers: John's intense delight in natural scenery, and Alexander's remarkable turn for mechanics, which in after life enabled him very soon to acquire proficency in any sort of handicraft to which he had occasion to apply himself.

It cannot fail to be interesting, to have the means of tracing the rise and development of literary tastes and literary ambition in a mind so situated as that of the subject of this memoir. It has afforded me much gratification to have met with a sketch of this nature drawn by himself. It forms part of a pretty long poem, in blank verse, which seems first to have been entitled 'Day Dreams,' and afterwards 'Confessions of Convalescence,' by himself in the following note:—

The occasion on which it was written is indicated

'The "Day Dreams," are the substance of some reflections with which I endeavoured to amuse myself, while slowly recovering from an illness which confined me for three weeks, June 1834. They were written out from such notes as I could then take; notes intended to recall the same train of thoughts, and the same ideas to my mind at some future period, for I was too weak at the time of which I speak, to write them at length: it was with some difficulty that I could crawl out to a retired spot which was the scene of my musings. This it is hoped will account for the allusions to pain and weakness which are to be found here and elsewhere.'

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In the earlier paragraphs, he traces with great simplicity the predominating feelings and aspirations of his boyhood; and thence, by an easy and natural transition, proceeds to record with considerable enthusiasm of spirit, and felicity of illustration, the development of those softer sentiments of the heart—to which, notwithstanding the restraints which from both principle and prudential considerations he imposed on himself, it is obvious from many parts of his works, he had been once, at any rate, no stranger.

The simplicity of the portraiture approaches sometimes to naiveté, but the reader who is interested in regard to the early dawnings of such a mind, will not relish the extracts the less on that account; nor will such fail to remark the striking manifestation of benevolence of character thus early developed, and for which Mr. Bethune was so much distinguished through life.

'Again the sun is hot and high in heaven;
The rustic sweats beneath the sultry ray;
The idler seeks the shady walk; and I,
With shaken frame and slow returning strength,
Upon the sloping bank, beneath the trees,
Have sat me down to ruminate a while,
And dream away the hours till health return.
These trees which spread their branches o'er my head,
And shade me from the sultry summer sun
Were young when I was young—we grew together:
I was a boy, and they were paltry shrubs.

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Even then, this was a pleasant place to me,
And here I loitered many an hour away,
And dreamed as pertinaciously as now;
But then my dreams did differ far from those
Which now I may indulge at this dim distance—
The scene hath changed its aspect—I am changed;
Yet now I would recall the shadowy trace
Which memory holds of those departed years,
And live again a moment in their light.
'The mournful ballad was my earliest lore,
And long ere I could read it for myself,
'Twas music to my soul; and I would sit
With a pleased melancholy, such as steals
Over the heart when day dies in the west,
To hear it warbled. Then the strain of Burns
Touched a strange chord in my yet boyish bosom,
Which thrilled beneath the magic of his words;
And when more years had added to my stock—
My little stock of knowledge, then I learned
That Nature's poet in his early day
Was but a peasant boy, as poor as I.
Then I went on to fill the picture up,
With all the colouring fancy could devise:—
Ragged he was, perchance, as I had been,
And sauntered far by wood or lonely stream
To muse and meditate—a sun-burnt wanderer;
Or slid with desperate skill the frozen lake,
Till the big snow-flakes, drifting through the rents
Of his long worn and sorely wasted raiment,
Which opened to receive them, had transform'd
Him almost to an icicle; or plunged,
By a rash venture, as I oft had done,
Through the frail pavement over which he glided,

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And almost drowned, trembled with cold and terror,
And durst not venture home for being whipped.
Yet when he grew to manhood, and had learned
To write and spell the words he wrote aright,
He made a book, and gained nine hundred pounds!
That was a monarch's treasure!—When I grew
A man, I'd learn to write and spell like him!
Then what might hinder me to make a book,
Which men would buy, and marvel how I made it.
What he had done, sure, I might learn to do!
Though rags and poverty were all my portion:
He too was poor; and I had made him ragged,
That we might be alike * * *
In the beginning of life's weary journey—
It seemed not weary then, but a rich walk
Which glittered with a thousand glowing charms—
And then my book!—that was the mighty shadow
Which filled my day-dream with unnumbered schemes.
Nine hundred pounds! oh, what a mighty sum!
Had I a hundred, ay or even fifty,
I never could exhaust it—it would serve
To make a nation happy.—Then the boys
Who, clad in tatters, and with battered feet,
In winter slid like me the frozen lake,
Should all have better jackets from my store,
And clothes to keep them from the pinching cold—
New shoes too, with a hundred tackets* each
And iron heels, I would bestow upon them:
Then I would give them shillings for their mothers.
(I got a shilling once, which gave me joy,
Such as I know not that I felt before.

* Hobnails.

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It was from a kind-hearted man, whose bre
I held a while; and when I brought it home,
My mother blessed him so, and said so much,
And seem'd so happy, that, to earn such blessing
From those poor mothers whom I would befriend,
Appeared the acme of all earthly good.)
Their fathers too, when sickness came upon them,
Should have for dinner wheaten bread and milk—
That was a luxury I, for once, had tasted,
And longed to do again, although it came not
Within the clutches of my ravening jaw
A second time; still I remembered well,
And deemed it daintiest of earth's dainty things.
Tea, too, should grace their boards on Sabbath-days,
And the coarse bannocks baken from the bean,
(Which last I never liked, although compelled
To take them for my dinner many a day,)
Should be exchanged for those of barley bread.
And I would buy them cows to yield them milk;
And give them meal when that was waxing scarce.
A hundred pounds would do all this and more,
Ay, twice as much, or may be twenty times.
And when my paradise was made complete
In this department, there was one old man,
Whom I had seen draining a hilly field—
That was when I was very young, but still
His picture was before me undecayed;
My memory had the scene in all its parts:—
The noonday sun was beating fierce upon him;
His coat and vest were doffed, and thrown aside,
His worn-out shirt, in rags, was black and wet
With the warm moisture which suffused his skin;
His bald head was uncovered, and his locks,
His thin gray locks, dripping and drenched with sweat;

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His face was soiled, his joints were stiff, and he
Appeared to ply his weary task with pain.
I saw him once again by a road-side—
The wind was cold—it was the winter time;
And snows lay deep on hill and valley round.
Beside him lay his staff and sundry hammers;
For he was breaking stones. But it was plain
That he had seen misfortune since I saw him;
A splinter from his hammer had cut out
One eye—it was the best—and left a hollow,
Dark, rayless, tenantless, where once it shone;
And penury and sickness, blent together,
Had set their stamp upon his meagre face.
My heart bled as I paused to look upon him,
And summed up all his miseries with an eye
Which held a boyish tear although it flowed not.
'Oft had his shadow flitted o'er my mind,
And damped my happiness, like a dark cloud;
For it was painful to behold him thus,
And still more painful that I could do nothing
(For I was penniless) to make him better.
But brighter images now crowded on me:—
He too should be a sharer of my fortune
When it grew fine! And I would build a house—
A house for him:—I could do this myself;
For I used to repair our kail-yard* dyke,
And make it stand without or clay or mortar;
And I should then have both. Sticks I would gather
To kindle up his fire, and bring him coals
To keep him warm throughout the winter day.
My heart danced at the thought;—how happy then!

* Cottager's garden.

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And for the crust of ill-baked oaten bread,
Unsavoury and unseasoned, dry, yet mouldy,
Which I had seen him labour to consume,
As he sat resting on the frozen bank,—
And the cold beverage from the way-side stream,
From which he broke the ice that he might drink,—
I would provide a comfortable meal;—
It should be new potatoes in the season,
And porridge when I could not come at these.
I never thought of slaying sheep and oxen,
To feed him with their *flesh*. That was a word
Of which I scarcely understood the meaning.
But then I should take care he had a *yard*,
With goose-berries a-plenty growing in it.
Of gooseberries I reckoned not a little,
For I had bought a pennyworth and ate them,—
And oh how sweet!—I never could forget it.
Of apples also I could tell the flavour,
For I had once ate two on the same day,
And found that they were pleasant to my taste;
And therefore he should have an apple-tree:—
O what a treasure it would be to him
To go and take an apple when he pleased!
And then if he should chance to have too many,
Why! he might sell them for a drink of *ale*,
To do him good when harvest days were hot.
Ale did not make men drunk—he might do this.
Then I would help him too to dig his yard,
And plant his kail, and hoe his cabbages;
For I was growing strong, and would be stronger
When I became a man.—My spirit drew
Nectar from these delusions, as the bee
Draws honey from the flowers on summer days.

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It was a boyish weakness which the world
May laugh at and forgive, though slow to pardon
Such flagrant follies found in one so young.
'Thus squandered I my time, while other boys
At school were picking up some useful knowledge
Which might be for their benefit through life.
At raw fourteen I had outgrown my fellows;
Of strength too I possessed the common share
Which boys have at this early time of life,
And like a fool I was full fain to show it:
I knew not that even then my strength was destined
To a severer trial than I had recked of.
'My days of idleness were at an end,
My parents could no longer keep me so,
And I was sent to dig a ditch more deep,
And dirtier too, than that the old man dug;
And for my fare I ate a crust as dry,
And drank from the ice-girded stream, and rested
Upon a stone from which I swept the snow.
My dining-room had clouds for tapestry,
Mountains for walls, the boundless sky for ceiling,
And frosty winds for music whistling through it.
Thus situated and thus serenaded,
I ate my dinner with—I know not what,
If it might be content or something else.
My work was hard, my strength inadequate,—
It tired strong men, and I was but a boy.
At eventide so tired was I, I scarcely
Could keep my fellows' way in walking home;
My joints were stiffened, and became the seat
Of weariness and pain; and sleep forsook me
For many a night, or only came by fits,
From which I woke to find I was not rested.

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Hard labour drives the downy god away
From bodies older and more firmly knit
Than mine could be at such an early age.
'This tamed me to my fate, and taught me wisdom,
And broke me to drag on the wain of life
With all the dullness of the sluggish ox
When yoked to till the field or draw the wain.
My spirits sunk; imagination strayed
No more in quest of those illusive scenes,
On which it painted happiness before;
My book-and-fortune dream was at an end;
And to obtain a little rest appeared
The greatest blessing which I could enjoy.
The sabbath then was sacred in my eye,
Not that it was a day to worship God,
But that it freed me from a galling yoke;
And I would count the intervening hours
Till slow revolving time should bring it back.
'Life is a drama of a few brief acts;—
The actors shift—the scene is often changed—
Pauses and revolutions intervene—
The mind is set to many a varied tune,
And jars and plays in harmony by turns;
And happiness, like heaven's blue arch, is seen
Upon the top of Expectation's mount,
And waiting for us there that we may grasp it;
But when we gain that cloud-capt elevation,
Behold! the hoped-for object is far off,
And we must start again in a new chase,
And climb another hill of greater height,
Upon whose summit gorgeously arrayed
The fair, false spirit seems to sit enshrined.
Still, still that dream runs on through every change,

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And still deceives the dreamer!—Why repine?
Man's happiness is more in the hot chase,
Than the attainment of the good he seeks.
'My dream, though interrupted, was not ended;
Though checked, it had not reached its final close.
As I grew older, I outgrew my toil;
My limbs resumed their wonted elasticity,
My step its firmness; and I felt my arm
Was competent for that which fate assigned it;
From boyhood I was rising into man,
And trod upon the verge of growth completed.
My mind, too, had embraced a few more objects;
And I had learned some knowledge of mankind,
Their impulses, their manners, and their passions;
For they had tutored me to know their ways
By lessons which were sometimes at my cost.
My heart expanded into a new life,
Rejoicing in the skill which it had gained:—
It might be worthless, but it seemed not so;—
And I was eager to increase my stock.
But yet I must have had some petty cares
To temper happiness; for, it was said
That I at times grew thoughtful, and was seen,
Or seemed, less prone to laugh than my compeers.
It might be so, or it might not—I forget;
But be that as it may, there is the trace
Of a long cherish'd vision in my heart,
Which years and accidents have left untouched—
'Tis but the trace—the vision is no more.
When vexed by calumny, or teased by foes,
Or fretted by false friends, that vision came,
Like the full moon emerging from dark clouds,
And shed a pure, soft radiance on my soul,

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Such as that maiden orb at midnight hour
Lends to the windings of the silver stream.
'My dream was then of some fair being, on
Whose love-warm bosom I should lay my head;
And, while I felt a fond heart beat beneath,
Forget that "as the sparks from fire fly upward,
So man is born to trouble"—whose soft voice
Should be the sweetest music to my ear,
Awakening all the chords of harmony—
Whose eye should speak a language to my soul,
More eloquent than aught which Greece or Rome
Could boast of in their best and happiest days—
Whose smile should be my rich reward for toil—
Whose pure, transparent cheek, when press'd to mine,
Should calm the fever of my troubled thoughts,
And woo my spirit to those fields Elysian,
The paradise which strong affection guards—
Whose heart with mine made one by Heaven's decree,
In mutual interchange of sentiment,
And thought, and wish—to the minutest feeling,
Should make our lives flow gently on together;
Even as two streams when poured into each other
Unite and form a broader, brighter river.
Oh! I have seen such streams, and paused and lingered
To see an emblem of that happiness
Which I was destined never to enjoy.
Where the first eddy of their meeting waters—
The deep commotion of their mingling tides
Subsided in a smooth and glassy plain,
Which, clear the placid sky above reflected—
Its fleecy vapours and its azure blue:
The banks the bushes, the surrounding hills,
They glided on in tranquil loveliness,

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To mix with that eternity of waters,
The all unmeasured ocean. * * *
That was the spot which riveted my eye;
And there I saw—in short, I know not what—
The forms and shadows of a thousand things:—
Those eddies were the first fresh burst of feeling,
Half pleasing and half painful which love brings,
When that delicious dream, like life, is new;
Then, the subsiding point was to my eye
The calm which union brings to plighted lovers;
Then, the long mirror of its mazy windings
Might represent the deep and settled flow
Of mutual sympathy and chaste affection,
Which hearts, by nature formed to bear love's yoke,
Enjoy in journeying through the vale of life,
Till Time shall merge them in Eternity,
Again to close the link their beings wore,
And find it strengthened in another state—
Not broken by death's transitory change.
'This was a weakness which I cherish'd long,
Even as men sometimes cherish their worst follies—
A deep delusion which was loath to part,
A dream from which but lately I awaked,
Nor waked without a pang; but it is past.
And now I bless my fate that it is thus,
Nor murmur though that pang was hard to bear.
It had been harder far, and bitterer too,
And worse to bear, to look on one beloved,
Whose destiny and hopes were ruled by mine,
And see her shrink in the November blast
Of my bleak fortune, like a northern winter,
Which broke around me and with frozen breath
Chilled those illusive fancies from my sight.'

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The following sketch is also illustrative of the musings of the same early period.

'A REMINISCENCE.'

'THE sun seems resting on yon western hill,
One little moment ere he disappears;
And a rich drapery of radiant clouds
Rising, and reddening in his setting ray,
Portend a day as fair as this to-morrow;
And in that smooth and softly-smiling lake,
Which lies in all the peace of infant slumber,
The hill, the corn-field, and the dusky crag,
The light tints of the sky, the living splendour
Of the rich clouds that cluster round the sun,
And the deep glory of the setting orb,
Are mirrored with a more than magic power.
* * * I, even now,
Do recollect an evening fair as this:
Oh it was in my boyhood!—with my charge,
A single cow, which grazed the daisied bank,
Whereon I lay and watched with a full heart
The scene around me:—'twas the same as now,
All loveliness and glory. The bright sun
Was setting—clouds that seemed almost too fair
For our terrene horizon clustered round him—
The hill, the corn-fields, and the cresting crag
Wore then the selfsame aspect even as now;
And that expanse of water, with its waves
Lulled by the calm which with the eventide came,
Smooth at my feet without a murmur lay.
In ecstasy of pure and holy feeling,
On all the gladness and the glow around me,

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I gazed until my dazzled eye sunk down,
And my thoughts turned to dream of my own fate,
Which then to me was all a fairy-book
With happiness bright pictured on each page.
The sun of youth on destiny's dark cloud
Had painted a bright rainbow to my eye,
Whose glowing arch extended to far years,
Leaving no likeness of a thing deformed,
Or aught from which regret or grief might spring;
And many a rising vision, richly wrought,
Like rays of light shot through a shady bower,
Streamed in upon my heart, brightening it up
With that sweet light which lives alone in youth.'

In addition to the information respecting the severity of the toil to which in his early life he was subjected, it is stated in the Introductory Notice to 'Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry,' that it was in consequence of his parents being, from ill health and other causes, unable to apprentice him to any trade, that he betook himself, at the age of fourteen, to the humble occupation of a labourer. By this species of employment, so ill-suited to that early period of life, his growth was stunted, and his bodily energies impaired. The 'ditch' which, in the foregoing extracts, he describes himself as having been 'set to dig at raw fourteen,' he described to me as being of extraordinary depth, requiring the utmost stretch of muscular exertion to throw what was dug out of it from the bottom to the top.

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The effects of such cruel toil on his unconsolidated frame he has himself graphically described:—'For more than a year afterwards, his joints, on first attempting to move in the morning, creaked like machinery wanting oil. Several years of his subsequent career,' he adds, 'were spent in struggles to relieve the circumstances of his parents; while those hours of leisure which he could command were employed in reading such books as he could borrow in the neighbourhood, and in otherwise endeavouring to improve his mental faculties.'

When he was about twenty-one years of age, a circumstance occurred which materially tended to quicken his taste for literature, and stimulate his ambition for literary pursuits. 'In the summer of 1825, a student from the college of St. Andrews, who was then struggling hard for his education, taught a small school in one of the houses at Lochend. He was an excellent reciter of poetry, and had stored his memory with a number of the best pieces of Scott, Byron, Moore, Campbell, and others. With these he frequently amused and delighted his acquaintances during his leisure hours, a considerable part of which were passed with us.'* This gentleman, now the Rev. John L. Adamson, late of Thornton, and now of Dundee, has, at my request, kindly favoured me with some highly interesting recollections of the subject of this memoir

* *Life of John Bethune.*

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and his worthy parents, in a communication which I shall now introduce to the reader :—

'Thornton, by Kirkaldy, 23*d Nov.* 1843.

'Dear Sir,—

* * * * *

'My acquaintance with the two brothers commenced in the summer of 1825. With Alexander I soon became very intimate. I had heard a good deal, from the people in the neighbourhood, of his talents and worth. I soon found, however, that their estimate of him, favourable as it was, was by far too low; and every opportunity which I had of conversing with him deepened the impression that he possessed powers, both intellectual and moral, of a very high order. One could not speak with him for many minutes without having cause to admire the sagacity and originality of his views. He had, even then, more than any man I have yet met with, an uncommon share of what Locke calls "*strong, sound, round-about sense.*" His education, as you are aware, had been almost entirely domestic. If he had ever been at school at all, it must have been only for a few weeks. I have often heard him say that to his mother (herself an extraordinary woman) he was chiefly indebted for his knowledge of letters. She, I may here remark, was extremely partial to what she called "fireside instruction," and often quoted passages from Cowper's "Tirocinium," in support of her particular views on

this point. Next to the bible, Cowper's poetry was her delight. She had him almost entirely by heart, and rarely failed to "nail" her own sentiments and opinions with a line or sentence of that delightful writer. She was altogether a rare character, auld *Aily!*—pious, but not austere—devout, but not *bigotted*—beneficent without ostentation—hospitable, kind-hearted, and generous even to a fault: she deserved (if ever woman on earth deserved it) the title of a mother in Israel. What a wonderful fund of humour she had too! Had her lot been cast in a higher sphere of life, and her education been like her abilities, she would doubtless have been admired as an ornament of her sex. From her, if genius be hereditary, the poets must have derived the singular talent which they possessed. The old man too—he was a perfect specimen of all that one can imagine of Nathaniel. I see him yet, the worthy patriarch, with the snows of eighty or ninety winters on his venerable head. You could not have met him on the public road, without feeling an inclination to lift the hat to him. He was a man of few words, but they were well chosen. He had seen many changes, of course, and, I believe, had come through many in his lifetime; but he rarely spoke of himself. When he did, it was rather of necessity than of choice; and when he gave counsel, it was delivered with a sweet mixture of gravity and gentleness. If from their mother the Bethunes inherited somewhat of poetical genius, I

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sure that from their excellent father's precepts
example, they derived much of that unbending
grity and noble independence, which uniformly
inguished them.

I have perhaps dwelt too long on these matters;
I could not resist the temptation of saying this
h in regard to two individuals whom I often
with the deceased in that happy cottage where
r genius first began to develop itself. Old
xander Bethune was certainly one of the "nobles
ature."

About the time above referred to, Alexander
engaged during the day in out-door labour.
attended, with other young men, an evening
s which I had opened at Lochend. Arithmetic,
hink, was the only department of learning to
ch his attention was directed at that time; for,
ile he complained much of his "far-backness"
he then called it) in regard to English reading,
seemed to think that it was not worth while to
nd much of his time in attempting to acquire
at his old habits rendered it unlikely that he
uld ever be a great master of. If I remember
htly, too, he exercised himself a little in penman-
p during those evening-school hours. This rou-
e work being ended, we generally retired, some-
es to his friendly dwelling, sometimes to the
ods of Inchrye, where he would talk over the af-
rs of the day, and entertain me with the "wit that
ere well aware." Our intercourse soon ripened

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into friendship. Reserve, or shadow of distrust, between us there was none. He was *my* instructor in regard to all the common affairs of this everyday world, and had more advantage over me in regard to life, than I over him in point of literature. I still *look back* with a melancholy pleasure to those six *months* which I spent in his neighbourhood. They were perhaps the happiest that I have known. I had found at length one who could sympathize with all my joys, and sorrows: * * * One whose mind was a sanctuary into which every secret might be carried without distrust—whose word was as good as ten thousand oaths—whose transparency of character was a gladdening contrast to all that I had seen at school or college,—and whose high mental capacities were so meekly veiled in the modesty of a truly christian character. He had at that time read few books, but the contents of such as had fallen in his way were well digested. With him, as with his mother, Cowper was quite an oracle. Of the "Pilgrim's Progress" I have heard him speak with deep interest;—Gray's "Elegy," Blair's "Grave," and Burns' "Cottar's Saturday Night," were great favourites with him; and he has often told me, after he became acquainted with our most admired writers, that he would rather have been the author of the Churchyard Elegy, than of all that Byron or Scott have penned. It was during the same summer that he first got a peep into the writings of the last mentioned poets. The "Lady

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of the Lake" was highly prized by him. I remember well the deep and delighted interest with which he perused that exquisite poem. To Byron, however, he for a long time gave a decided preference. The Astronomical Discourses of Dr. Chalmers also deeply rivetted his attention. But nothing that I recollect of pleased him so much as the neglected volume of my friend Dr. Gillespie on the *Seasons*. Of that he and his brother were passionately fond. I really believe, that at that time he thought the learned professor one of the greatest men that ever lived on the face of this blessed world; and I am strongly tempted to think that some traits of his character were brought out by his familiarity with that eloquent production. Certain it is, that the beautiful descriptions and moral loveliness of that little work, made a deep and indelible impression upon his heart. This I know from conversations that passed between us long after. I never could get him to admire Moore. The beauties of Campbell he appreciated very highly.—But I tire you with details, and shall not say more.

'The first of his poetical efforts (so far as I know) is the following:—

"How sad to see the friend we love depart
With all that's dear torn from our bleeding heart!
No pen alas! can write, no tongue can tell,
What feelings mingle with a last farewell.
While Memory traces all that's gone before,
And magic Fancy future scenes runs o'er,

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Each pang we felt, each sorrow that we knew—
Again we seem to feel it all anew;
We see them now a moment and no more,
To us they're gone with those the floods before.
As waves from their deep bed heaved by the wind,
Thy sounds, farewell, convulsive heave the mind.

* * * * *

To all I'd resolutely bid adieu
With coldness, save, my honour'd friend, to you;
But in this breast thy memory still shall live,
While life one recollecting power can give.
And though my name by thee forgot should lie
In thickest shades, 'neath blank oblivion's sky,
Yet on this heart thy name shall still abide
While life rolls through my veins the purple tide;
Though Time should every other thought estrange,
To thee, my heart shall know no future change;
To me none else shall fill thy place anew,—
But now comes o'er my heart the word, adieu!"

'The above was written some time in the year 1826, and appears to have been occasioned by parting with a friend. It is valuable, only, as shewing the existing tendencies of a mind capable of greater things. So sensible was the author himself of its imperfections that he adds, "Burn this sheet as soon as you read it; if I thought you would not, it should suffer martyrdom immediately."

'I don't think it necessary to speak much of the opinions which he held in regard to a variety of topics only of passing interest. Some of these you will gather from the accompanying letters. I may

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mention, that from the first day that I knew him, he was impatient and intolerant of every thing like oppression—that every exhibition of selfishness, on the part either of rich or poor, was most painful to his generous nature—and that nothing so readily awakened his indignation as the heartlessness of those in the higher walks of life who must have their own luxurious desires gratified, although the widow and orphan should perish for lack of bread. He abhorred every species of affectation. The object of his deepest earthly reverence was a "*poor* but *honest* man." He was, moreover, (who would have supposed it?) a pretty successful mimic. I have known him hit off * * * * to perfection. Take him all in all, we shall not see his like again.

'I must again apologise for this lengthened scrawl, and beg that you will believe me to be, dear sir, yours most respectfully, JOHN L. ADAMSON.'

To Mr. Adamson, Alexander Bethune was at this most important period of his mental history under the highest obligations. Not only was his attention drawn to the most beautiful and sublime passages of our modern poetry by Mr. A's recitation of them while he resided at Lochend, but after his removal to a distant part of the country, he copied and sent to him, not only innumerable short pieces, but long extracts from larger works, both in poetry and prose. Of such I have found, almost literally,

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volumes preserved among our author's papers, interspersed with elucidatory and critical remarks, generally evincing admirable taste and judgment. The value of such services, rendered with so generous an enthusiasm, to one who had so limited a supply of books, it is impossible to estimate.

Like many other young men whose minds have a literary tendency, Mr. Bethune's first attempts at authorship appear to have been made in the form of verse. We see from the portions of 'Day Dreams,' already inserted, that he very early felt the stirrings of literary ambition; and his early literary aspirations, like those of most other persons of similar mental tendencies, had a strong tinge of the romantic. How he first came to think seriously of attempting to write a book is thus stated by himself in one of his letters:—'As it is sometimes curious to see what a trifling incident will give an impulse to the human mind, I may here be permitted to tell you what it was that first set me seriously to the task of writing a book. A young lady, the daughter of a neighbouring laird, who farmed his own property, of about eighty acres, himself, had been in the habit of sometimes calling to inquire for my mother, who had been a servant in the family of her grandmother. From her she had learned that myself and my brother were much given to reading, and that we sometimes went a little farther, and made attempts at writing. We were accordingly favoured with the loan of a book, called, "The

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Amethyst;" a sort of religious annual. * * We were forthwith requested to furnish some verses for the succeeding number, which were to be forwarded by the said young lady to its editor. Without being greatly taken with the proposal, the verses were forwarded to our supposed patroness. About three weeks thereafter, being then employed in breaking stones upon the public road, I was saluted by the young lady, who, after enquiring after the health of my father and mother, proceeded with some embarrassment to tell me, that, after a great deal of consideration, she had come to the conclusion that it would be for my advantage to suppress the verses; but that she really felt vexed, as I might possibly feel vexed at their not being sent, &c. &c. To this I replied, that the thing had excited no expectations, and therefore, could occasion no disappointment; and that I should be truly sorry for myself, if I could be "hurt" at such trifles. But while I said this to her, I said, or rather thought, to myself,—All very right, and only what might have been expected; but, in time, we shall see if a smooth-faced girl is to have the power of determining whether I am to appear in print or not; and from that hour I never lost sight of my purpose for a moment till the M. S. of "Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry" was completed.'

Possibly the young lady may have formed as just an estimate of the merits of the piece in question as its author; at any rate young authors are

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generally very incompetent judges in regard to the fitness of their productions for the public eye. A boy from fifteen to eighteen is enraptured with his own mouthy rant or empty jingles, and is quite impatient for the day when the public voice shall pronounce him to have rivalled the 'Elegy in a country church-yard,' or the 'Sermon on Modern Infidelity;' when after a few years he will, probably, feel that he owes no small debt of gratitude to those who may (much to his chagrin at the time) have restrained him from very needlessly making himself ridiculous. Such repulses in the case of a person of real genius or talent, will, as in the present instance, only prove a stimulus to greater and more successful exertions.

In the month of May, 1835, Alexander Bethune addressed a letter to one of the Messrs. Chambers, Edinburgh, soliciting his advice and assistance in order to the bringing of some of his productions before the public. This letter, Mr. R. Chambers writes me, interested him and his brother much, and he expresses his regret at having been unable to lay his hands on it. In these circumstances I was much gratified at finding what appears to be a pretty accurate copy among Alexander's papers. In his statement of the views and feelings with which he entered on his early efforts at composition, the attentive reader will not fail to mark the same striking indications of benevolence of spirit which appear in the poetical extracts given above.

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'*May* 15, 1835.

Sir,—You may well be surprised at thus re-ing a letter from one whom you never either or heard of before; and your surprise cannot lessened if it should turn out in the end no bet- than a beggar's petition. And yet beggary in way or other, at some period of their lives, ms to be entailed on by far the majority of the nan race; even kings cannot always escape it. s however comes not to solicit half-crowns, as poor poets are said to do. Its writer would be as from asking any thing in that way—even a ny—as the greatest miser upon earth could be m granting it.

As I am neither skilful at finesse, nor cunning accomplish my purpose by manœuvring, it were haps better that I should make the matter known once; because sooner or later it must be made own, and any attempt on my part at a long pre-ble would only be an unnecessary trespass on ir time and patience. I have by me as many ses—which I will not call poetry, though that ms to be a common name for every thing in me—as would make a small volume; I have also many essays in prose, suppressed letters, &c. &c., would make another; and besides these, from at I have already in imperfect manuscript, and m some floating ideas which I could easily lay ld of, I could make shift to furnish a third, com-sed of stories or little novels, the subjects drawn

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from humble life. Now, my object in thus addressing you is to ascertain if, without injuring yourself, or endangering your literary reputation, you could give any assistance in palming these upon the public, or point out the means by which this could be done; and if such were in your power, if you would be willing to lend your influence or advice, to one who has no better claim than his ignorance of these matters. Here you will no doubt think that you have enough of me * * *

'Having thus placed at the beginning what a greater tactitian would have placed at the end, I would now, if such be admissible, state a few of those causes which have produced this propensity to scribbling, in one of the ignorant and unwashed many. I had in my day seen some harrowing scenes of distress, among the class to which I belong—distress for which no one seemed to care, or, if it excited any attention, it was only that sort of it which begins and ends in talk. Like Burns, I had early "some stirrings of ambition." I felt that had I been possessed of a little money, I could have oftener than once lifted a fellow creature from the gulf of misery, and made him comparatively happy. I felt also that in so doing, I should have made myself happy too; and I longed for the means of thus conferring happiness on myself, and others at the same time. But in me those risings of the heart had no outlet. What could a labourer do with 7s., or 7s. 6d. a week? My efforts I found were but a

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mockery of benevolence, and showed rather the will than the ability to relieve. I might indeed have wriggled myself into some sort of notice, and earned higher wages,—I might have got myself promoted to be foreman over a few ditchers or dykers, and by "damning them to get on," as is customary with such officials, I might have procured a little favour with their masters, and a little money for myself. But I never considered the end, all important as it was with me, as a sufficient justification of the means which would have been indispensable for its attainment. Some tortuosity of mind, or it might be pride, prevented me from becoming, in every thing except the name, a slave-driver, and forbade me to add a link to that chain, which, when worn by myself, I felt heavy. My only other alternative would have been, to learn some more lucrative trade; but I never could discover the means by which I was to be supported during an apprenticeship. Thus shut out from every prospect of ever being able to procure more than the bare means of subsistence for myself and my parents—whose support depends solely upon an only brother and myself—it can scarcely be wondered at, that I should turn my thoughts to writing. This appeared the only open door. Others had succeeded in the same way, and why should not I? Such was the question, which in these circumstances naturally suggested itself to my mind; and, without much consideration as to its propriety, or the host of eminent

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authors who had gone before me, I ac
My idea of the matter, it seems, had l
that of Chatterton; viz., that men's a
enough if they would only use them. I m
tion farther, that from the period at w
read, so as to understand the sense of
had been a reader, or rather a devourer, c
which fell in my way. This served to st
with a few ideas upon various subjects.
been an observer of what was passing
and there is one thing which I still recol
ing struck me forcibly at an early peri
the difference between the motives, whic
assign for their actions, and those from
really proceed. This served as an in
closer observation. I became vain eno
pose that I had made some discoveries
see a little farther into men's hearts
others, and with this very slender prep
under every imaginable discouragement
dabble in literature, or at least, to blac

At first, as I have already stated, I
tend with many disadvantages. The w
regular education, consisted of four or
at a subscription school, when about
age, where I learned the letters of th
and little more. My mother however,
supplied this defect of public instructio
ing me to read in an old-fashioned wa
father had given me some lessons in wr

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smattering of arithmetic. Of grammar I had heard, and knew that there was such a thing; but as a branch of education, I was perfectly ignorant of it: indeed, to a considerable extent, I am so still. When to this it is added, that I have all along lived in an obscure and thinly inhabited part of the country, where, with a few solitary exceptions, no one cared about books, or reading, or writing; it will be readily granted that my situation has not been the most congenial which could be thought of, for such attempts. Indeed others might wonder, as I have done myself, how the fool-hardy idea ever entered into my head. It did however enter, and the result has been what I have already stated. Whether I have at all succeeded, or otherwise, is not for me to determine; and this is one reason, why I should be anxious to submit a few of these unquenched snuffings of the midnight taper, to some one whose acquaintance with literature, might enable him to pass an opinion, as to the propriety of giving them to the public.

'I should ere now have mentioned, that I became a reader of "Chambers Edinburgh Journal," almost immediately after its first appearance; and the biographic sketches which I there met with, gave a new and strong stimulus to my mind. These articles gave to the world at large, and to me, a series of the lives of individuals, who like me, had been born and bred in obscurity, and who by industry and unwearied perseverance, had raised themselves to re-

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putation, and a comfortable independence. T
served to determine me. These men had succeed
—many of them under disadvantages as great
any which I had to contend with; and, till I
made the attempt, how could I determine that
cess was beyond my reach?

'Though I frankly confess that I have been,
am still, ambitious, and though this ambition
paved the way for that liberty, perhaps an
warrantable one, which I am now taking at this
ment, I disclaim all ideas of "getting on in
world," as it is called. Even though successf
should not have the most distant intention of
propriating the products of that success for
purposes of idleness and luxury. With those
rifications of folly and exhibitions of vanity, in
form of balls, dinners, feasts, assemblies, &c.
which the wealthy are so prone, I have no sympat
After having been subjected to the most grind
species of toil in boyhood, and after having b
twice blown up by gunpowder in whinstone q
ries, and escaping narrowly with my life, my "r
hand still is able" to provide for my few nat
wants, and as I have been careful not to mult
artificial ones, comparatively speaking, I req
but little for myself. And those motives which
erate the most powerfully upon others should
but a small share in influencing me. I n
looked upon a fine coat as the alpha and omeg
man's ambition. Neither could I ever conside

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ability to do nothing, and the having a horse's four feet to carry one, when his own two might serve, as the chief end of his creation—an attainment to which all others are of little importance. In accordance with these heretical opinions, I never had any idea of pushing myself into the society of the rich. I think I have discovered that in many things they are as ignorant as myself, and in most respects as selfish as one could well wish them to be; and for these reasons I do not look upon their society as an object worth straining after, or their smiles a thing greatly to be coveted.

'I am aware that these notions are sadly out of keeping with the established order of things, for it has long been a prevailing opinion, that to be either a wise or a literary man, one must be a gentleman, or, at least, that he must eat, and speak, and be on very familiar terms with those who have a right to be so called. In compliance with this dogma, I suppose, some poor authors have deemed it necessary to write whole books of flattery to rich patrons, and to treat that class to which they originally belonged with the greatest contempt. From this part of the poor author's creed, however, I am a dissenter:—I have little or nothing in common with the gentleman of the present age, nor do I wish to have more. And would the public favour me with any share of its approbation, there are some vices, and many follies, at the roots of which I could cut with as heavy a hand, and perhaps as keen a wea-

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pon, in a Galashiels coat and cor
as I could do in a dress of broad c
see how any modification of dress
effect upon a man's intellect or
neither can I imagine how roast
pudding should make a man either
or better hearted, than porridge and
last, with the addition of some
water, has been exclusively the fare
writer; and he has no wish to chan

'In those attempts at authorshi
hitherto made, I have endeavoured
men simply as men, and to divest m
of those invidious distinctions before
often bow down, sacrificing truth a
Mammon, and bartering the interes
the favour of a few. Had I not sup
peculiarity of my situation, that I h
tunities of taking views somewhat
—and perhaps vanity would prom
more accurate than—those adopted
some subjects, I should never have t
ing this application to you. After
mistaken; and to put the matter to
than any to which it has yet been s
have for some time past entertained
not only of your literary abilities, bu
from the many fearless, and, I woul
ful, attempts which have been made
Edinburgh Journal," to unmask error

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folly, and to exhibit truth in its own broad and unequivocal light; (not but that I have seen some things in that work which I considered unworthy of both it and its conductors, for I would on no account flatter. But I am not criticising the Journal)—from the opinion which I entertain of its editors, and the hope that their written sentiments are emanations from the heart, the overflowings of their own feelings,—though my purse, from causes which I could satisfactorily explain, is all but penniless, I would undertake a journey to Edinburgh, for the purpose of reading a few extracts from my productions, and having the satisfaction of hearing your opinion of them. I would do this most readily, if you would only promise an hour of your time to a stranger who has no claim upon either your generosity or attention, unless his ignorance of these matters were to be admitted as one.

'Although, after some hesitation, and some doubt as to the propriety of the step, I have thus ventured to trouble you with my request, I am perfectly aware that you may find it expedient to reject it. You may do this without the least imputation of blame. There is however one point upon which I would wish to establish a proper understanding between us. It has been said that it is dangerous to make a poor man a dependent. Should no other weighty reason intervene, let not this deter you. In so far as any thing beyond advice and a small share of literary assistance is concerned, I have no

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wish to become dependent on any one. I have but a small stake in the world—one worthless life is my all; and when I cannot provide for myself, no one shall hear me murmur at my fate. I have already contemplated the worst that can befall me—I have brought it near in the nakedness of truth. It is but a few days' privation of the necessaries of life, and a few pangs such as I have suffered before —no great matter; and then I shall neither be dependent upon, nor troublesome to any. As an evidence how little I require for myself, it may be mentioned, that the coat in which I now write has actually served me since the year 1827, during the whole of which time it has been on service every day, with the exception of about eight months, for which period, between accidents, small-pox, and other diseases, I was mostly confined to bed, or at least, unable to wear it much.

'In conclusion, I may remark, that though neither conceited as to my own abilities, nor very sanguine in my hopes of success, my temperament is, I trust, equally distant from that "dreep-daily" sort of disposition which can never permit its possessor to do anything save whine out dolorous lamentations for want of ability, and hypocritical pretensions to modesty. There is nothing which I would not attempt, nor any difficulty from which I would shrink, with the prospect of being ultimately successful before me. I would not however travel the dirty road to public notice and fame which some have

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waddled over. I would prefer poverty and an obscure death, with an honest independence of thought and principle, to wealth and eminence procured by fawning upon the rich, and flattering lordly patrons.

'I should now proceed to unfold some plans for the future, which I have in my eye; but as this would be premature and out of place, till I am better acquainted with your sentiments on the subject, and whether you would prove friendly to the proposal which I have made, I defer it to a future opportunity. And should you, sir, deem it indispensable to decline all further correspondence upon this affair, I feel assured that it will be done civilly. But let me request that it be also done promptly, and either the real reason for doing so assigned, or no reason at all; for it would not add to my good opinion of mankind, if I had room to suspect that one of the editors of "Chambers' Edinburgh Journal," was among the little minded bódies who constantly manage every thing by deceit.

'My task is now nearly complete. I have only farther to request, as I have done my best to keep my scribbling propensities a secret, that you would keep this communication one too, and that you would answer it, should you deem it worthy of such attention, with your first convenient leisure. Some one has said, Milton I believe, that "suspense is torture." I shall neither be in suspense nor torture about it; but I feel that a certain degree of anxiety must attend me till I am apprized of your decision,

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from which with childish weakness I could wish to be freed as soon as possible. But do not therefore make any sacrifice either as to the time or manner of answering this letter: delay till you find convenient, and reject it in two words if you think proper. Apropos, when I speak of convenience: by writing a contracted hand I have succeeded, I believe, in cramming more matter into this sheet than you may find it convenient to read. But as I was aware that my opinions are in some respects heretical, I deemed it necessary to give you an outline of them, such as my space would admit of, that you might not be in any way deceived as to my true character. I shall only trouble you farther by adding, that I am not without some hopes of our yet becoming acquainted.—Sir, your most humble, most obedient servant,

A. B.'

Among Alexander's papers, I have found another copy of a letter, shorter than this, addressed to the same quarter, and purporting to be accompanied by a tale and a sonnet. The result was, that exactly three months after the date of the letter just inserted, "The Harvest Day," a tale of humble life; and one of its author's finest and sweetest, appeared in Chamber's Edinburgh Journal, (No. 185); and "Hazelburn, a Story of Scottish Rural Life," as the leader of No. 188. These, so far as I have been able to ascertain, were the first of his productions which appeared in print. From some of his

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early correspondence, it appears that, a considerable time previous to this, he had through a friend transmitted some pieces to Blackwood's Magazine; but I have no reason to think that any of them were ever inserted.

The following extracts are from copies of letters addressed, or meant to have been addressed, to a lady. They are without date, but are probably referable to a period some years earlier than the date of the letter to the Messrs. Chambers; though from the bearing of the contents of that on Mr. Bethune's literary history, it seemed proper that it should precede them.

"When I saw you yesterday, I should have stated, that the verses I had transcribed, were not those which you had requested; but that if I should ever by any means discover them, they too should be sent. I should have also stated, with respect to my early scribblings, that I had only burned what I considered incorrigibly bad; and for your kind offer of protecting my worthless productions, I should have made the warmest acknowledgement, and said, that I should not only account it a favour, but that I should be most proud to be permitted to deposit them in such hands. All this I should have certainly done, had not my wits gone a wool-gathering. But my memory, and my good manners, are like Absalom's mule, they always get from under me at my need; and then, when I am afterwards

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caught among the briars and thorns o
flections, like that unhappy prince, J
for this faithlessness! I suffer now, t
—I deserve it.

'I was heartily sorry to hear from
that "The ———" had been a losing c
publishers; yet I could have anticipa
from my own observations on mankin
——— instead of going didactically
about interesting the imagination of
and then instructed them without lettin
he was doing so, he might perhaps hav
better. Physicians are often obliged
their medicines, to make them agreeable
of their patients. Why should not the
sician follow their example? Men are
be stormed into the right way: they n
ened, even to do their duty. And it we
better to write even a tale, exhibiting
influence of religion on the hearts, and
those who own its sway; or bringing
beauty of some moral virtue, with its
society; it were better to write such a
haply, may be read by thousands, than
book full of the most valuable instruc
unlooked at on the shelf of a booksel
sentiment, satire, in skilful hands, may
either subservient to the cause of virtue,
to bear upon vice with cutting effect. I
discourage serious and evangelical writin

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who already *know*, and *feel the truth*. But what is to be done with the world?——Instruct it in the way in which it seems most willing to take instruction? or look upon it with the gaze of unavailing sorrow? —or, what is almost the same thing, write books for it which it will not read? These are questions which I dare not answer, though I should much wish to see a satisfactory solution of them. If the light literature of the day, instead of exhibiting absurdities about supernatural agency, which should be laughed at, and trumpeting forth the praise of human butchers, called *heroes*, who should be execrated as demons—if, instead of these, it could be turned into a better channel, and made to paint in the vivid colours of imagination and fancy, the loveliness of unassuming virtue, and the beauties of true religion, it would certainly be a powerful engine for reforming, at least, the surface of society; and even this, would be a considerable step gained in the good cause. I have often thought La-Roche, an admirable specimen of that kind of writing, which should be more cultivated than it is. I never yet knew any who had read that affecting narrative of piety and suffering, without admiring it, and, what is more, feeling their hearts for the time, bettered by the spirit which it breathes. By the bye, that well imagined story, is not altogether a fiction. David Hume was the sceptic philosopher which it represents, and he actually resided for some time in the family of a Swiss clergyman of the given name. Pardon,

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madam, if you can, the tediousness of
and believe me to be, with the ut
&c. &c.

'Madam,

* * * * *

'To show that I am not affected
peevishness of ill-humour or the fas
pride, I shall take the liberty of incl
formerly sent for your inspection, wi
alterations, and one or two trifling a
I made to it the other night. Upon
might presume so far, I would take
would favour me with your strictu
Do not tell me, as some people of
modesty would do, that you cannot
own judgment, and that you have no
matters; but take a slip of paper
while reading it, and get on thus:—
so, is not amiss: the third or fourth
an idea with which I am pleased, be
Always assign some reason if pos
"Verse such a thing, is very bad: I am
with the second line; and the fourth,
the life of me! it is so &c." "Vers
thing, is worse and worse; it has n
time, sense nor sentiment: the first
second insipid, the third dull, and
pid! In short, the writer must ha
if not wholly asleep, when he comp

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is the sort of criticism which I should like, and the sort which you must bestow upon every one whose taste you would wish to amend: not sweeping assertions, such as, "It is too gloomy." Sentences of this kind go to cut down, not to amend—to make a ruin, not to repair an old wall; and at best, little advantage can be derived from them. Be as severe upon the piece as you think it deserves: do not sacrifice truth, or one sentiment of your own, for the sake of pleasing. If I were a-gape for flattery, I should be at no loss where to apply; but to you I look for something better—for undisguised truth! Tell me therefore candidly, if you can, what you like, and what you hate in it. If you cannot, tell me as frankly, that it is contrary to your inclination to interfere with such matters, and it shall sleep. This might indeed be some disappointment, though it would be wrong in me to take it as such; for I should be one of those to whom nothing can come wrong. Once more, though I am almost ashamed of saying so much, upon so silly a subject, I would beg to remind you, that it is *your own opinion* upon which I shall set any value. Do not show it to either ladies or gentlemen who have skill in poetry; for, for the acumen of professed critics, I can have very little respect, believing as I do, that their opinions are oftener guided by prejudice and party-feeling, than by truth; and after all they can say, either in praise or blame, experience teaches us that the unsophisticated taste of common readers must

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ultimately be the test of every literary production —the sentence by which it must live or die.

'As I am in the mood of writing just now, and as I have moreover a considerable portion of unoccupied paper before me, I shall here attempt to palliate if that be possible, some of the most serious objections which have been brought against the piece. To those who, from a natural cheerfulness of disposition, have been accustomed to contemplate the sunny side of every thing, and who have had ample opportunities for doing so by being nursed in the lap of an affluent or an easy fortune, my poor verses may appear gloomy indeed. But with me, situated as I have been, and am still, in the very humblest walk of life; conversant with scenes of wretchedness and poverty, of which the rich have never even dreamed, and accustomed from boyhood to read the unequivocal signs of misery, in the care-worn features and meagre countenances of individuals with whose "tales of woe" I from time to time became acquainted—thus situated, and thus trained, were my ideas of the present state materially different from what they are, I should be, what I am still loath to suppose myself,—a thing without a heart! Add to the above, a constitutional weakness of mine, the consequence of which is, that I could never look on distress without feeling its saddening influence steal over my spirit like an eclipse, and you will scarcely wonder that in those moments of solitary musing, which are in part the lot of all,

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my sentiments should have in them a certain tinge of gloom, which I can only conceal by silence. Perhaps too, these melancholy reflections in me, may have been nursed by the circumstance of my being often employed alone, and thus left the sole companion of my own thoughts for many days together. I deem it not altogether unnecessary to make you acquainted with these things, trifling though they may seem, in order that you may be the better able to judge of the sentiments of others, whenever you may be called upon to do so. It is only by taking a view of society in all its different phases, that an extensive knowledge of the manners, thoughts, feelings, sentiments, &c. of men can be gained; and it is only by the same means, that the art of judging accurately whether they are right or wrong can be acquired. Now, to apply all this to the difference of our tastes: we have made our observations on life, from very different points of view. You, it may be, have seen and delighted to see it, in the bright sunshine of prosperity—where Fortune was profuse of her favours, and Plenty smiled. I, on the other hand, have been accustomed to contemplate it under the cloud of adversity, where Want invaded, Poverty oppressed, and Misfortune lowered. From this cause, I am convinced, comes the difference of sentiment which I have already noticed. But,

"Hadst thou been born where I was bred,
* * * *
Thou would'st have felt—I know it true,
As I have done, and aye must do."

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'Among the few words we exchan
passed me at Lindores, there was
your part, viz. that you "wished to
flowers as possible." This is a go
and I neither can nor will quarrel
with all deference to your better jud
here beg permission to arrange for y
a few stray thoughts upon the subje
of late occupied my own head. But
make this attempt from pride, or from
of temper; but merely, that you n
quainted with the thoughts of anothe
they may be, upon a subject which
to have taken your attention.

'I do think then, that this taste ma
too exclusively, and that there is som
those who continually fly from the
sorrow to flowery scenes, may in th
light-hearted and unfeeling. I am a
that, as imaginary flowers cannot tr
ren heath into a cultivated garden,
all the flowers of poetry which the
thered from their own Aonian mou
gloom of settled sadness, or change m
mirth. So true is this, that there a
anything of a light or cheerful natur
offensive to the heart, as a puppet sho
the coffin of a dear departed friend w
eye. At such seasons, the heart will y
thies to scenes of kindred gloom, a

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pressure of its woe, in the contemplation of sorrows by which its own are outnumbered, when it would turn with disgust from all the florid descriptions of happiness which the poet or prose-writer ever produced. Here the lines of Burns are so much to my purpose, that I cannot resist the temptation I am under of quoting them:

> "The winter's howl, it soothes my soul;
> My griefs it seems to join.
> The leafless trees, my fancy please;
> Their fall resembles mine!"

From this it seems to follow, that there is a sort of propriety in cultivating, in poetry and works of taste which are intended for being extensively read, the mournful, the pathetic, and even the gloomy, as well as the light, flowery lay, the laughing song, and the cheerful sonnet. For my own part, I will frankly confess that I have ever been more partial to the former of these than to the latter. "The Emigrant," by Erskine, the "Elegy written in a country Church-yard," and an "Elegy," by Michael Bruce—all which I found in the tattered leaves of an old collection, were my favourites, long before my reasoning powers could be said to be developed. In these pieces there was to me, even when a mere boy, that *music of the heart*, which at this moment I want words to describe.

'It has been said, "that religion should have a tendency to make people cheerful and happy." This

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is certainly true, and I add my amen to it with all my heart. But let us glance for a moment on the manner in which this happiness is produced. The Christian Dispensation was not intended to change this state of suffering, which has been emphatically called "the vale of tears," into an earthly paradise; else why did our Saviour himself warn his followers, that *in the world they should have tribulation?* Here, the righteous must suffer as well as the wicked. One lot happeneth to all; and till our nature undergo some radical change, which even the most holy man on earth has no just reason to expect, men, let them talk as they will, must feel their sufferings, and grieve over them, albeit they may do it in secret. The comforts and consolations of religion, I should then humbly suppose, and that prospect of a happy futurity which it presents to those who will accept it on the offered terms, were intended to support the soldier of the cross under all the toils, sufferings, difficulties, and dangers of his present state; even as the hope of victory, and the prospect of that rest and peace which is to follow it, supports the spirit of the warrior, and cheers him on amid the mortal strife. And, to follow out the comparison, as the man who never fought, cannot enjoy the victory with half the satisfaction of him who struggled hard for it, in the midst of fallen thousands, while Death mowed down the ranks around him, and where the dead or dying body of a fellow creature received the pressure of his foot with every step he made in

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advance; so neither can the man who has all his life long travelled the smooth and flowery plain of prosperity—I speak comparatively—appreciate half the value of religion. It is the apparently wretched being, whose life has been one long winter; who has waded through affliction, and rested upon thorns; but who, in the midst of all his miseries, has cultivated an aquaintance with his bible, "his Saviour, and his God,"—it is he, and he alone who can with the greatest propriety, and with the most heart-felt sense of its truth, speak of the comforts and consolations of religion. Yet ask even him, and he will tell you, that he felt his sufferings bitter, that they were gall and wormwood to his spirit, and he might have sunk under their weight; but he turned from them to contemplate those happy regions whither he expected soon to go, those realms of peace from which the shed blood of a Redeemer had excluded every object which could annoy.

'From some passages in this letter, I now begin to fear that you will be ready to set me down for one of the most gloomy and unsocial beings upon earth. This however, I assure you is not the case. When in the company of those with whom I am acquainted, and indulging in tattle, my besetting sin is a proneness to what a late eminent poet has called "sarcastic levity of tongue;" and if in those hours of abstraction and loneliness, of which I have already spoken, I should sometimes indulge in a mood less light, as I ask no sympathy from the

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world, it should in all conscience pardon me, as I hope you can. so believe it does. From you I dare scarce one thing. course such treatment, after having inflicted on that much melancholy stuff; yet pardon me if something 'I should now conclude; but there is yet good- to which I must advert before doing so. In the sorry of our short interview at Lindores, you said to you "felt disappointed at my not sending whose else for the A———." This you must allow me, hand. if possible, to look upon as only a piece to natured civility; for I should be heartily think myself the cause of real disappointment any one, and more particularly to you, upon patience I am now trespassing with a high excuse to For the length of this letter I have no plead, except your own good nature; and of this, if the world would give me any credit for my skill in physiognomy, I would say, you have an abundant share. With some fears, lest the freedom I have taken may have offended where I should least wish to do so, I must now conclude in the usual way, by subscribing myself your most humble, most obedient —and I will add with confidence, for of this I am quite certain—your most worthless servant,

'A. B.'

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CHAPTER II.

SETS TO LEARN THE WEAVING BUSINESS WITH HIS BROTHER—TRADE FAILS—ACCIDENTS FROM GUNPOWDER—EXTRACTS FROM 'DAY-DREAMS,' ILLUSTRATIVE OF HIS FEELINGS DURING CONVALESCENCE—LETTERS TO A YOUNG FRIEND EMBODYING ECONOMICAL AND OTHER ADVICE—SPECIMENS OF POETICAL ATTEMPTS.

These sketches bring down Mr. Bethune's literary history to the period of his first appearance before the public as an author. Several other matters, some of them of painful interest, which the narrative has outrun in point of time, now demand our attention.

In 1825, he set himself to learn the weaving business with his brother, who had just completed his apprenticeship, expecting to realize higher wages in that way than as a day-labourer; but, after expending all that they both had saved by 'the most desperate economy,' as he himself expresses it, in purchasing utensils, the trade almost immediately failed, owing to the general crash of 1825—6; 'and both were glad to find employment as day-labourers, the one at 1s. 2d., and the other at 1s. a

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day.' 'Before the trade had recovered, the house which they occupied as a workshop was required for the accomodation of a family. For a number of years afterwards it did not appear that it would have been advisable to make any great sacrifice to to obtain another; and thus the whole of the weaving utensils, which, but a short time before had cost what would have been a little fortune for them, were no better than so much useless lumber.'* This proved but the forerunner of a series of disappointments, misfortunes, and disasters, which attended both the brothers to their graves.

'From 1814,' says Alexander, in a fragment of a letter written during his last illness, and intended for a medical gentleman in the west of England, who had taken a benevolent interest in his welfare —'From 1814 to 1837, with the exception of one year, we lived in a house, which, for the greater part of that period, was in such bad repair, that when it rained, we had to place the most of the dishes that we possessed upon the top of the beds, to intercept the water that oozed through the roof; and when the rain began to fall after we were sleeping, it was no uncommon thing for us to awake in the morning with the bed-clothes partially wet about us. In winter, too, during a rapid thaw, or a protracted fall of rain, the water came in under the foundation of the back wall, and flowed in a

* Life of John Bethune, Second Ed. p. 29, 30.

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stream through the floor, nearly the whole length of the house, till it made its escape by the door. Nor was this the worst of it; in some places it formed pools of such extent, that my brother and myself, who slept at the farther end of the house, were frequently obliged to lay stones and pieces of wood on them to enable us to reach our bed. We did not seem to suffer any thing at the time; but I am now convinced, that to the damp air with which we were so often surrounded, he owed a part of that delicacy of the chest, which at last consigned him to an early grave, while I am, perhaps, indebted to the same cause for a something of the same kind which yet remains to be noticed.

'In 1826, a severe cold caught during harvest, and with which my constitution was left to struggle unaided, produced a cough and a degree of expectoration, which lasted till next spring. Previous to this period I had never been subject to cough; but afterwards if I caught cold and did not get quit of it in two or three days, it always produced a cough which frequently lasted for three weeks or a month; and, except during the heat of summer I always expectorated more than was natural: only, when free from cold I could raise it without coughing. These circumstances impressed my mind deeply with a conviction that I was destined to fall an early victim to consumption. So deep, indeed, was this impression, that for years, at the time alluded to, on the evening of my birth-day, or of the long-

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QUARRY ACCIDENT.

est or shortest day, or, in short, any
which had any thing to distinguish it from
I used to walk out and watch the setting
a peculiar interest, and as the sun
dually disappeared behind the western
template the strong probability of my
bered with the things which were, before
again set at that particular part of
Of these solemn reflections I afterwards
myself while writing a story, which was
along with some others in a small volume
February.

'On the 11th November, 1829, (as stated in my
brother's life,) while employed in a quarry, I was
thrown into the air by a blast of gunpowder, which
exploded prematurely; and after being carried to
a distance of nine or ten yards, pitched, head fore-
most, upon a cairn of stones, many of them with
edges almost as sharp as knives. When the peo-
ple from a neighbouring hamlet arrived, the blood
was flowing so fast from such a number of wounds,
principally about the head and face, which appeared
to them of so hopeless a character, that, for a time
they did not think of calling medical assistance;
believing that I must be gone long before any thing
of the kind could reach me. I may mention in
passing that my upper lip was cut off on two sides,
so as to admit of being folded back upon the left
cheek. My tongue was almost cut through on one
side, and two teeth knocked out, while my nose had

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on crushed over upon the left cheek, with a deep
t extending the whole length of it, and then, turn-
g outward below the left eye, terminated at its
ıter angle. At the inner angle of the same eye,
perforation had been made into the nostril, from
hich my breath issued for eight days. On my
ead matters were equally bad. Besides a num-
er of smaller wounds, in one instance, the skull
was laid bare to an extent of, perhaps, three or
four square inches, but without being fractured.
My hands and one of my legs were also sadly injured;
but into these details I shall not enter.—Having
been conveyed to the nearest house, after two hours
of washing, stitching, and bandaging of wounds, I
was put to bed; and all that the medical attendant
would say, in reply to the anxious inquiries of
friends and others, was, that "if fever did not come
on, I might perhaps get through." Almost con-
trary to expectation, I soon began to recover, when
the same gentleman was heard to remark that I
"must have had a good constitution"—a thing, which,
for reasons already stated rather surprised me. In
four months from the date of the accident, I was
again making some attempts to resume work.

'On the 14th November, 1832, exactly three
years and three days from the time at which
I met with the first misfortune, I was once more
subjected to nearly the same sort of discipline.
On this occasion, there were two of us employed
about the blast when it exploded. The other man

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was dashed against a ledge of a rock, and
less than two hours; while I, more fortunate, died in
thrown upon the wheel of a cart, which ran
be loading with stones at the time, and
insensible from before it. I was again sadly scorched up
and cut about the hands, head, and face. Indeed,
the one side of my face now bears no resemblance
to the other. But what was worse, my right eye
had been cut across both the eye and the eyelid;
and in healing, a portion of the former got fast in
the latter, which to the present moment keeps up
a degree of chronic inflamation in it. The inflama-
tion, however, was so acute at first, as entirely to
deprive me of rest and sleep for three weeks. Dur-
ing this period, if I once attempted to lie down in
bed, the increased flow of blood to the head, and
the intolerable pain which it occasioned, made me
start up again the next minute. In time the inflam-
mation and pain began to abate; and in something
less than four months I was making some attempts
at labour.

'From the effects of the first of these accidents I had recovered tolerably well. Indeed, I think that for a year previous to the occurrence of the second one, I was as stout as ever I had been in my life; but from it I never fully recovered. I was able to perform an ordinary day's work without any inconvenience, and have seen a good deal of hard service since then; but when hard pushed I always suffered more from fatigue and weariness than before.'

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Some of his feelings and musings during his state of convalescence after one of these disasters, probably the last of them, are disclosed to us in the following extracts from the piece in blank verse which has already enriched the autobiography of these pages :—

'After seclusion sad, and sad restraint,
Again the welcome breeze comes wafted far
Across the cooling bosom of the lake,
To fan my weary limbs and feverish brow,
Where yet the pulse beats audible and quick—
And I could number every passing throb,
Without the pressure which physicians use,
As easily as I could count the chimes
By which the clock sums up the flight of time.
'Yet it is pleasing, from the bed of sickness,
And from the dingy cottage, to escape
For a short time to breathe the breath of heaven,
And ruminate abroad with less of pain.
Let those who never pressed the thorny pillow,
To which disease oft ties its victim down
For days and weeks of wakeful suffering—
Who never knew to turn or to be turned
From side to side, and seek, and seek, in vain,
For ease and a short season of repose—
Who never tried to circumvent a moan,
And tame the spirit with a tyrant's sway,
To bear what must be borne and not complain—
Who never strove to wring from the writhed lip
And rigid brow, the semblance of a smile,
To cheer a friend in sorrow sitting by,

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Nor felt that time, in happy days so fleet,
Drags heavily along when dogged by pain.
Let those *talk* well of Nature's beauteous face,
And her sublimer scenes; her rocks and mountains;
Her clustered hills and winding valleys deep;
Her lakes, her rivers, and her oceans vast,
In all the pomp of modern sentiment;
But still they cannot *feel* with half the force,
Which the pale invalid, imprisoned long,
Experiences upon his first escape
To the green fields and the wide world abroad:
Beauty *is* beauty—freshness, freshness, then;
And feeling *is* a something to be *felt*—
Not fancied—as is frequently the case.
'These feelings lend an impulse now, and Hope
Again would soar upon the wings of health:
Yet is it early to indulge his flight,
When death, short while ago seemed hovering near;
And the next hour perhaps may bring him back,
And bring me to that "bourne" where I shall sleep—
Not like the traveller, though he sleep well,
Nor like the artizan, or humble hind,
Or the day-labourer worn out with his toil,
Who pass the night, scarce conscious of its passing,
Till morning with his balmy breath return,
And the shrill cock-crow warns them from their bed—
That sleep shall be more lasting and more dreamless,
Than aught which living men on earth may know.
'Well, be it so: methinks my life, though short,
Hath taught me that this sublunary world
Is something else than Fancy wont to paint it—
A world of many cares and anxious thoughts,
Pains, sufferings, abstinence, and endless toil,

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From which it were small penance to be gone.
Yet there are feelings in the heart of youth,
Howe'er depressed by poverty or pain,
Which loathe the oblivious grave; and I would live,
If it were only but to be convinced
That "all is vanity beneath the sun."—"
Yes: while these hands can earn what nature asks,
Or lessen, by one bitter drop, the cup
Of woe, which some must drink even to its dregs,
Or have it in their power to hold a crust
To the pale lip of famished Indigence,
I would not murmur or repine though care,
The toil-worn, frame-tired arm, and heavy foot,
Should be my portion in this pilgrimage.
But when this ceases let me also cease,
If such may be thy will, O God of heaven!
Thou knowest all the weakness of my heart,
And it is such, I would not be a beggar,
Nor ask an alms from Charity's cold hand:
I would not buy existence at the price
Which the poor mendicant must stoop to pay.

* * * * *

'—— If that change, the last on earth, might leave
Unchanged the spirit which is leaving earth,
And if that spirit might again return,
To be a witness of the ways of men,
When death hath passed, and all is earth again
Which to the earth belongs, or from it came,—
I would behold those young and happy beings
Who sport at eventide across the green
Of the brown hamlet, far among the hills,
With brows as sunny as the tropic clime,
Eyes bright as is the evening star whose ray

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First greets them at their inoffensive pastime,
Cheeks fresh as the first roses of the spring,
And hearts as yet untaught one wicked thought—
Unchilled by care—untutored by deceit;
While no foreboding comes to mar their peace,
Like mildew withering the young germs of hope,—
Light as the breeze which waves their curling locks,
Sport on, nor know that "man was made to mourn!"
* * * *

Still I would see—if such is to be seen,
The man by adverse fortune placed below
The notice of the world and men's applause,
Who nobly tames his inclination down
To his necessities, and dares to think
Not as that world hath thought, but truth inspires,—
Who makes the headstrong passions of his youth
Yield to the effort of a powerful mind.

'If spirits for themselves their path may choose,
Then would I wander by the yet untilled
And scarcely trodden mountain, where the heath
With sterile boundary meets the upland field,
And the huge rock and giant stone defy
The feeble ploughshare and the power of man—
There would I wander in the harvest time,
To see unseen the reapers as they sit
At the shorn ridge's end upon the bank
All fragrant with the heather's purple bloom.

The harvest field, he informs us, was the principal, and earliest scene where he cultivated his faculty for observing human character.

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'The many faces too which there were met,
With all the signs of feeling, passion, thought,
Which flitted o'er them * * *
Formed a rich field for an observant eye—
A field where Fancy for herelf might reap,
And hold an hourly revel of her own.
Among them first I tried to read the lines
Grooved on "the human countenance divine,"
To search the eye for sentiment, and trace
Its look askance, upturned, or downward bent,
With all the attitudes—the idle hands,
Which seemed to play with trifles, or were clasped
Upon the bosom, or were firmly clenched,
Although no foe ostensible were near,
To some according impulse of the heart,
Of which these were so many outward signs.
Among them too I learned the little all
I e'er could know of human character;
And this to me was much, for I was fain
To study man, his manners, thoughts, affections;
And woman too.'

The following letters, and extracts from letters, to a young man occupying a similar rank in life with Mr. Bethune, contain suggestions and advice of the highest importance.

'Lochend, *Nov.* 1, 1834.

'My dear David,—Nothing could afford me greater pleasure than the simple narrative which you gave me in your last—except one—of the affair at the swallow's nest. In this I can read

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the workings of a mind awake to true feeling, and I am happy at it. I need scarcely add, that you must inculcate humanity by example as well as precept—the former is often the more powerful mode of the two; and without it, the latter must almost always go for nought. Forgive the freedom I am taking, for it is only to put you on your guard against those inadvertencies which the ingenuity of malice may sometimes construe into cruelty.

'The principle of cruelty in the human bosom is a mysterious one; and it were, perhaps, difficult to trace it satisfactorily to its source. Much, however, may be accounted for by bad example. No one is at pains to teach his children the evil of this abomination. Most parents are themselves often guilty of acts of wanton cruelty to animals; these their children see and imitate, and think it sport to do so, till the habit becomes confirmed, and thus the evil is perpetuated from one generation to another—from year to year, and from age to age. To be humane, it is not absolutely necessary that men should be civilized, or that they should be christians. That which can only be taught by a long course of instruction to some, is intuitive in others, and thus there have been civilized savages and barbarous christians—humane infidels and butcher-hearted believers. I am almost upon my hobby at present, but I must drop the subject else I shall have no room for a number of other particulars which I must notice.

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'In answering your last, I scarcely know how to begin. Deeply have I felt, and at this moment deeply do I feel, the difficulty and danger of your situation. To a young and inexperienced mind, placed, as you are, in the midst of temptations, your circumstances must be peculiarly trying. Yet do not shrink from the path of duty: it is only he who fights, who can look for victory, and it is only to him who perseveres that the reward of virtue can be given. If there were no temptations to contend with, and no snares to be avoided, it were small praise to be virtuous; but this world has provided an ordeal by which all must be tried before they can deserve that honourable name! And here, if the voice of a friend could be of any service in strengthening your resolutions, I would raise mine, and say, Do not upon any account yield to that most debasing of all vices, Intemperance. But against this I hope you are already steeled. The man who besots himself with liquor, is worse than a beast. He reduces himself to a state, at which the veriest lunatic might laugh in perfect scorn; for what class of madmen can be so despicable—so far beneath the dignity of rational creatures—as those who court the mental malady; and with phrensied dexterity gulp down the fatal draught which destroys reason, enervates the frame, and which, if persisted in, must ultimately sink the immortal spirit to that place of horror from which the imagination appalled shrinks back. But, apart from

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futurity altogether, one would think that
insipid, heartless drivellings of a drunken
enough to make drunkenness detestable
of all—a thing to be feared and hated
the sting of the deadliest adder! O, my dear
Never suffer yourself to get drunk! It requires
some firmness to resist the insinuations of them for a
ard at the outset. He may repeat them for a
but when he sees that he has no power over you
must then as a matter of course cease; and he
then not only envy, but yield you the homage
secret respect, for that resolution which he knows
to be wanting in himself. With respect to the
disagreeable affair with which you have intru
me, I would only say, Be kind and affable to
but stern and unbending in your integrity. Never
even for a moment, seem to hesitate, or make
slightest compromise of your principles, for the
would only open a channel for a great flood of temptations. If by this line of conduct you should have
pen to give offence to any, as it is most probable
you will, it may be necessary in some cases to sooth
them as far as possible; but in most instances you
will succeed much better, by taking no notice what
ever of their displeasure—by appearing cheerful,
easy, and unaffected by it, in short, what you used
to be, till the fit wears over; and when at last the
countenance of the offender begins to brighten, speak
and act to him as if no offence had ever been either
given or taken. This, I am of opinion, you will

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he easiest way of getting over such matters.
glad that you have had the acuteness to dis-
the hollow pretences of common friends: this
hat I expected of you. Self-interest is the
ding principle—the great deity to which the
f this world bow the knee. What can I add:
let them adore their idol!—it is good! Yet
are many who deserve no better friends than
you have spoken of. It is flattery they are a-
or—not friendship; and the sycophant who
skilled in this sordid art, is ever sure to in-
e himself the most deeply in their favour.
I have had more to say on the subject, but
t for room. I should also have noticed the
d circumstance of your leaving K———
erm; but for the above reason, I must drop
of that also. All I can do now, is to state
s that I have wearied you out, and to beg
u will believe me to be, without the least
on, Yours, sincerely, A. B.'

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *Dec.* 5, 1837.

ear David,—When you break open the seal
ich I intend to secure this sheet, you will
ised, without my telling you, of my inten-
trouble you with a letter. I should not
ought of troubling you in this way, or of
from your pocket the shillings and pence
ill no doubt be demanded by that avari-

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cious scoundrel, the *Post*, so soon, ha
for the belief that I may be able to
something which in the end may c
these losses. And now you will be w
this mighty secret can possibly be!
wee lad and I'll tell ye,—only have
must not be hurried. You have, I d
most other young people, thought th
glorious fellows—frank, free-hearted
who could part with their money in
taverns, and in short, upon all occas
tlemen,—who held shillings and hal
more estimation than so many old
predisposition to admire such char
be one of the fallacies of youth, a
suppose that you may have admired
what is more, that you may have son
inclination to imitate them. You h
sume, like me and many more, been
circumstances; and then, in moment
tion and disappointment, you have no
that those were happy men who had
wherewithal to supply their wants, an
a penny when a penny was really
such occasions you have, I might alm
tainty, envied these men the happines
of mind which you fancied their ind
confer. You may have heard too o
misers, and you may have heard th
grovelling wretches—sordid, mean-s

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who never felt for the sorrows of others, and deserved no sympathy in their own. To the justness of the censure thus passed upon such characters it is reasonable to suppose you have often given your cordial assent, and deemed them worthy of unmingled reprobation. Between these conflicting sentiments it is likely your mind may have been tossed to and fro, like a ship without a rudder. It is to the unspeakable loss of most young men, that they enter life and pass through it, admiring and despising, according to the fashion of the day or the impulse of the moment, without ever having formed any fixed notion of propriety, or any definite rules by which to regulate their conduct. I have thus endeavoured to sketch the characters of those who may have been from time to time the objects of your admiration, your envy, and your reprobation. I would call your attention to what is likely to be the result of motives and pursuits so essentially different. For this purpose it is only necessary to walk on a little with the respective characters. The dashing young fellow who sports his half-crown with an air of as much indifference as if it had cost him nothing, must in time, as sure as the sun serves the world, come to have no half-crowns to sport. Want of employment, sickness, or old age, must to a certainty bring the thing to pass—and then, behold the man who was once an object of admiration among his jovial companions, tattered, torn down, and, last and worst, despised by all on account of

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his poverty. As to
His character through
having made money
he in general soon f
the honest and dishon
though he may be suc
darling project, he lose
the possession of mone
—comfort, and the res
Between these extreme
while he stoops to neit
able means to procure
one when he has proc
accordingly. Such an
be called a hard man,
which none need expe
occasionally directed a
be sure to find a certain
those who pretend to
will in their hearts env
their envy be altogeth
pendence of circumstan
pendence of feeling, an
free to think and act
to the dictates of cons
be said to enjoy either
then, to a certain amo
is honestly come by,—a
and said against it, an
nonsense about the bea

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ne abroad, is as indispensable to comfort and the
ne enjoyment of existence, as the presence of the
n is to the making of daylight. Never suffer your-
lf for a moment to be deceived by those who may
sert the contrary, but set them down in your own
ind for either knaves or fools. Your situation and
rcumstances at the present time seem to be favour-
ble for saving money; and my secret is neither more
or less than to initiate you into the mystery of
oing so with all possible speed. In the first place,
hen, in the evening of the very day on which you
ead this letter, go to the nearest stationer's, and
purchase a two-penny blank paper book; and when
you return home with it, take your pen and write
upon the top of the first page the word, *Income*, and
on the second, *Expenditure*. When this is done, see
what money you have in hand, and if any, place it
to account as part of Income, with the date on
which you received it. Let nothing deter you from
entering every farthing which you receive, and
every farthing which you expend, in your book, un-
der the proper heads, and with the proper dates
attached to them. This is an easy matter, and see
that you attend to it:—you will find it of more im-
portance in the end than an addition of five or even
ten pounds to your yearly wages. And now, for
the management of your other affairs, I must entreat
you not to deceive yourself, or suffer others to de-
ceive you, with the slang which passes so current,
about "the dearness of living in England." I have

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been told by very sensible people who have b
there, that it is quite possible to "live cheap"
England as well as in Scotland, though perhaps n
so very cheap in the former as the latter. Weigh th
matter well in your own mind, and fix your "living"
upon as economical a scale as is consistent with
comfort—which in the end will also be found most
conducive to health and longevity. As to your
clothes, I need hardly remind you, that to be neatly,
but at the same time plainly dressed, is, in the esti-
mation of every well regulated mind, a thousand
times better, and a thousand times more becoming
the station of one who has to "work for his bread,"
than all the trash called finery, and all the tawdry
ornaments which he can possibly tie or button upon
his four quarters. Let your clothes therefore be
such as to unite durability of material, plainness of
manufacture, and neatness of make. As it is pro-
bable by this time that you have fallen into the
fashions and prejudices of the place where you live,
you will, no doubt, have a struggle before you can
break through them, but if you have embraced them
to any extent, break you must, else, it appears to
me, that your going abroad will ultimately stand
you in little stead. To make this breaking as easy
as possible, you may, in the first place, try to make
economy fashionable, that is, you may explain to
your associates the propriety of some course similar
to that alluded to above, and, if the thing can be
done, persuade them to adopt it. It might also be

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nove to form a Savings Society—each mem-
;ontribute something weekly or monthly—
regate to be placed in a Savings Bank, and
)le to be again divided among the members
end of the year, or at any other time which
be deemed convenient. I cannot find room
ow out the subject; but if you think it worth
while to take it up, perhaps I may recur to
some future period. And now, my dear friend,
lieve you will be ready to ask, "What can he
riving at with me and my money? and what
ne got to do with either the one or the other?"
e you to ask these questions personally in my
ing, I might probably look stupid, and find it
sult to answer them: but with some four or five
dred miles between us, I answer with the utmost
nness, that I have been thinking, in the first
ce, as the sun is now shining on you in the shape
fifty-two pounds annually, it may be as well for
1 to be making "hay;" and in the second, as you
ll probably marry, and "settle in the world," as
is called, some time or other, you may not then be
e worse for the "fodder" thus provided. At all
'ents, as you owe me nothing, and as I never in-
nd to cheat you out of any portion of your savings,
ou cannot accuse me of sinister motives.

'A. B.'

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'There is one sent
letter, for which you
reprove you—it expre
of the world. It is
of the world to weig
still it must not be a
a young man enterin
an unblemished char
if therefore, the good
to correspond with yo
possible means. This
live is ever so ready t
ever it can find anyt
would require to avoi
very appearance of it.
you to banish feeling fr
It is our duty, both as
sympathise with the dist
and to do every thing in
sufferings. These hints a
and as such I hope you wi
or their writer.

Were principles such a
working men, the nation w
sure saved from those over
tress, which are every now
labouring, and more espec
population. Whatever a
calamities may be justly

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e cannot be a doubt, but that were our
o cultivate prudent habits when labour
and wages good, they would not, when
t fails, be in a few weeks reduced to
stitution.

letter to Mr. Chambers, as well as from
extracts given from 'Day Dreams,' the
have perceived that many of Mr. Be-
rlier attempts at composition took the
ng, and, in our day more especially, most
le, form of verse. Several of these pieces
ly before the public in his two volumes of
ie of them characterized by considerable
As I have no intention of introducing any
llection of such as remain unpublished,
volume, I shall occasionally present to the
few of those that appear the more worthy
vation. I do not mean to say that many
pieces are characterized by a high order of
A continuously sustained freshness and
composition in verse, and more especially
, is a characteristic of the most decided
poetic genius, under the guidance of a taste
d and refined by an extensive acquaintance
best models. To have the language flow
d full into the proper mould, from the liv-
t of feeling—to have always the requisite
of words and syllables, at once for the
and the sense, along with the right words
rhyme, has been a felicity not always at-

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tained by the high
Bethune made no p
He was only an
susceptible of ima
often succeed as a
object or occurrenc
experience. Whe
discerning reader
lieve that he could
in verse, with co
power; albeit his t
to that severeness
which so strikingly
ther, and most of hi
circumstances, the
tions of a piece as
standard which a
which I presume w

'In the spring o
it was agreed that
himself) should co
volume of scriptura
devised "The Poeti
Owing to the repea
ther, and other cau
The contributions o
before the public, a
specimen or two of

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SING TO THE LORD.

PSALM C.

'Sing to the Lord ye sons of earth—
In joy and gladness sing,
And let the mountain-echoes round
With your hosannas ring.
There comes a day when peace and love
Shall greet your longing eyes—
When rugged rocks shall bow the head,
Hills sink, and valleys rise.

'Sing to the Lord, ye dusky sons
Of sun-burnt Afric's shore,
Who listen to the Niger's stream,
And midnight-lion's roar:—
Sing! for a joyful morn shall break,
To cheer your moral night,
And on your plains the Prince of Peace
Shall pour celestial light.

'Sing to the Lord, ye in whose veins
The life-blood scarcely flows,
Where frost-rocks guard the polar seas,
Amid eternal snows:—
Sing! for a sun on you shall rise,
Whose life-reviving ray
To light and loveliness shall wake
Your cold and wintery day.

'Sing to the Lord, even ye, who pant
Beneath the burning line,
Where Nature faints, and savage beasts
To war with man combine:—

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Sing! for a l
To cheer·y
And fresher
Along the

' Sing to the
From the r
Where iceber
In wrathfu
Sing! for a b
Upon the s
And a bright
Your froze

' Sing to the
That stud t
Where on the
Your spicy
Sing! for a v
Your lonely
And o'er the
The bridge

* *

' Sing to the I
On continen
For the light
On you yet

' Sing to the l
Of Power's
Who groan be
To Tyranny

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Sing! for the walls are shaken
Which guard your cells around,
And the lightning gathers in the cloud
To dash them to the ground.

'Sing to the Lord in every clime
On earth or ocean-isles,
Where endless winters freeze, and where
Perpetual summer smiles:—
Sing! for the time is drawing nigh
When Nature shall assume
The robe of innocence again,
And like an Eden bloom.'

In a piece founded on Christ raising the widow's son of Nain, embedded among some very dull versifying, are two or three stanzas on A Mother's Love, which we do not think will be readily surpassed in beauty by anything that has been written on the subject—a subject which comes home to the most sacred sympathies of every rightly feeling heart.

'A MOTHER'S LOVE.'

'Unlike all other things earth knows,
(All else may fail or change,)
The love in a Mother's heart that glows,
Nought earthly can estrange.
Concentrated, and strong, and bright,
A vestal flame it glows
With pure, self-sacrificing light,
Which no cold shadow knows.
All that by mortal can be done,
A Mother ventures for her son:

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If marked by worth or merit high,
Her bosom beats with ecstasy;
And though he own nor worth nor charm,
To him her faithful heart is warm.
Though wayward passions round him close,
And fame and fortune prove his foes;
Through every change of good and ill,
Unchanged, a mother loves him still.
Even love itself, than life more dear,—
Its interchange of hope and fear;
Its feeling oft a-kin to madness;
Its fevered joys, and anguish-sadness;
Its melting moods of tenderness,
And fancied wrongs, and fond redress,
Hath nought to form so strong a tie
As her deep sympathies supply.
And when those kindred cords are broken
Which twine around the heart;
When friends their farewell word have spoken,
And to the grave depart;
When parents, brothers, husband, die,
And desolation only
At every step meets her dim eye,
Inspiring visions lonely,—
Love's last and strongest root below,
Which widowed Mothers only know,
Watered by each successive grief,
Puts forth a fresher, greener leaf:
Divided streams unite in one,
And deepen round her only son;
And when her early friends are gone,
And when her early friends are gone,
She lives and breathes in him alone.'

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In a piece designated 'Consolation,' founded on the words—'He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' occur the following lines:—

'Hast thou on Pleasure's sunny hill
Been lulled to sleep in rosy bowers,
And only waked to drink thy fill
Of happy Day Dreams 'midst its flowers?
And have they vanished like the dew,
When by the wind the grass is shaken,
Or, as the passing shadow flew,
Leaving the heart of hope forsaken?
Seek not again the airy height,
Where gay illusions cheat the sight;
But turn thee unto Him who gave
His life th' all hopeless else to save.
Did troops of friends when wealth was thine,
With smiles and talk thy table throng,
And eat thy bread, and drink thy wine,
And join with thee in dance and song—
But when along thy dark green leaf,
The mildew of misfortune fell;
Fled they with speed thy home of grief,
All lonely leaving thee to dwell?
Mourn not their loss—a craven crew
To Mammon's worship only true:
But turn thee to that faithful Friend,
Who loves his own—loves to the end;
In want or woe forsakes them never,
Sustains them now—enthrones for ever!'

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CHAPTER III

CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING THE PUBLICATION OF 'TALES AND SKETCHES OF THE SCOTTISH PEASANTRY' —COMPOSITION OF 'LECTURES ON PRACTICAL ECONOMY' —SUBMITTED TO DR. MURRAY—HIS OPINION—CONSEQUENT REMODELLING OF THE WORK—BUILDING OF THE HOUSE AT MOUNTPLEASANT—REMOVAL THITHER —DEATH OF A. BETHUNE'S FATHER—VERSES ON THAT EVENT.

I NOW return to the history of Mr. Bethune's first publication. 'Sometime in July 1836,' he informs us,* 'the manuscript of "Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry" was finished and taken to Edinburgh; but, had it not been for its falling into the hands of one who ever after proved a steady friend, it is highly probable it might have been brought back and burned in disgust.' The individual thus referred to, was a young man then engaged in one of the printing offices in Edinburgh; but one, as the reader will soon have occasion to perceive, whose powers of mind and accomplishments would then have qualified him to fill and adorn a far higher situation. I am sorry that this gentleman's mo-

* Life of John Bethune p. 63, note.

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desty has disallowed me the gratification of introducing his name to the reader; but justice demands that I should say, that the importance of the literary service he rendered both to Alexander Bethune and his brother, it is impossible to estimate. He procured a publisher, both for 'Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry,' and for 'Practical Economy.' Not only did he subject to a most careful and searching revision the manuscripts of these works, but also the manuscripts of all the tales contributed by both the brothers to 'Wilson's Tales of the Borders,' as well as the 'Life of John Bethune.' Indeed, there cannot be a doubt, but the general propriety of expression and purity of style, which Alexander Bethune attained, were in no small measure owing to his free and enlightened criticisms. The elements of mind necessary to constitute a classical writer were possessed by Mr. Bethune, but they needed some training and correction—as it would have been more than marvellous, considering his situation and limited advantages, if they had not. He needed a medium through which his works might reach the public with an every way graceful effect; and there could not have been a fitter than he found in the friend to whom these remarks refer. In these circumstances, I deem no apology necessary for drawing pretty largely from a correspondence which arose out of such a relation. The circumstances which led to the commencement of this correspondence and consequent friendship, are in-

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dicated in the following letters and extracts. It may be necessary to premise in explanation, that when Mr. Bethune visited Edinburgh on his literary adventure, he had been charged with some message from an aunt to a family in Leith. The first person whom he met with in delivering that message, was a brother of his future friend, from whom he experienced such kindness that he was induced to leave his manuscript with him: to him, therefore, the first of the following letters is addressed. His future friend he did not at that time see.

'LOCHEND *Jan.* 17*th* 1837.

'Dear sir,—As I have changed my place of residence since I saw you in July last, I now write to acquaint you with the circumstance. If the manuscript of which you kindly took charge, has proved, or should prove, of such a nature that no publisher will run the risk of printing it, I would beg leave to suggest, as the readiest, and perhaps the safest conveyance for its return, the "Fife Defiance" coach, which leaves Campbell's Hotel, No. 22, Prince's street, Edinburgh, three times a week, and passes this neighbourhood on its way to Perth. Instead of Inchrye (as formerly) my address must now be—— To be left at Glenburnie: Alexander Bethune, Lochend, by Newburgh.

As there is at present, no great chance of our meeting soon again, and as this may be the last occasion I may have for writing you, I cannot let it pass without

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giving expression to that feeling of gratitude which I still retain for the kindness I experienced when I was your guest. In the words of Scripture, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in!" Be the result of my journey what it may, I do not, and never can, repent my coming to Edinburgh. The magnificent buildings, the enchanting landscape, and, above all, the hospitality, and friendly attention which I received, are things not easy to be forgotten. Give my best respects to your father, of whom my aunt's eulogiums would induce me to think well though I had never seen him; and be so kind as tell him, that I have still before me, a vivid recollection of his frank manner, and candid and truth-speaking countenance. To him my best wishes are due, for the friendly advice which he so frankly bestowed.'

'A. B.'

For a reason which will immediately appear, this communication was not answered by the person to whom it was addressed but by our author's future literary friend.

'Edinburgh *March* 1, 1837.

'Dear Sir,—Your letter to my brother of the 17th January, would have been acknowledged ere this time, had not that duty devolved upon me, in consequence of a most serious accident which happened to him, about the middle of January. During the severe frost that then prevailed, he fell, and dislo-

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cated his uncle—a misfortune which, after the
tracted period of intense suffering and the
danger, has at length terminated (on the knee-
in amputation of the limb below the greatest
come through all, however, with the ere
tude, and is now fairly out of danger his
well, although a long time must elapse will,
be restored to a state fitted to resume as
occupations. This melancholy event
every reason to believe, form an apology
to you as it is abundant for him.

'For the neglect with which, I am ashamed to con-
fess, your manuscripts have certainly been treated, I
am alone responsible, my brother having immedi-
ately after he received them, consigned them to me,
as one more likely than himself, to get them advanta-
geously disposed of. The gentleman to whom I imme-
diately thought of offering your manuscript (viz. Mr.
Shortrede, an Edinburgh printer) was so busy, that I
did no more at that time than simply mention the cir-
cumstance of such manuscripts being in my possession,
declining to press them on him, when his hands were
full otherwise, and preferring to wait until the com-
pletion of his other engagements might permit him
the more readily to come to a bargain. During this
long interval, I have had ample opportunity of per-
using the stories, and have thereby been enabled,
heartily and conscientiously, to recommend them to
Mr. Shortrede, who has agreed to print and publish
the volume at his own risk, allowing the author fifty

for
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copies in boards, by way of price for the absolute copywright of the work. When published, it will in all probability sell at from three to four shillings a copy. Mr. Shortrede is still so much engaged, that I cannot state specifically when the work will be gone on with; but he wishes it to be understood as another condition of his bargain, that he be allowed to print at his leisure.

'Considering that such works are not in general a very marketable commodity, the trade being at all times inundated with myriads of a similar description, I conceive the above to be a tolerably handsome offer; particularly as I do not believe there exists another publisher in Edinburgh who would undertake even the risk of printing, &c. the sale of such books about town, being in almost all cases very meagre. They meet the readiest market in the country trade, with which Messrs. Fraser & Co. (Mr. Shortrede's publishers) have the advantage of a constant communication. The name of the printer is the best guarantee for the neatness of the typography, and that of the publishers, for general outward appearance. I shall endeavour also to procure notices of the work, in the Edinburgh, and perhaps some of the provincial newspapers. Should you feel disposed to close with the terms I have proposed, you can communicate your wishes to me at your leisure.

'The title of the work, though in itself facetious and quaint, is I think, susceptible of improvement;

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PUBLICATION OF 'TALES AND SKETCHES.'

for "The Watchman's Grave," is in my op
neither the most conspicuous, nor the best
Long titles are agreeable to neither eye nor ear
the one in question would be vastly improved
it more simple, concise, and explanatory of the
tents. I would suggest that "Tales and Sket
of the Scottish Peasantry," be simply adopted;
* * * and your own name and occupation
life be substituted; for, besides the attraction th
would be to the public, the author has no reason t
be ashamed of his "brain-child." The preface is
excellent. I have read over all the tales with much
pleasure, deriving both amusement, and instruction
from them. They throw light on many portions of
the character of the Scottish peasant, which have
hitherto remained in obscurity, and betray in the
writer an acquaintance with human nature which
could only be attained by shrewd personal observa-
tion. The story of the "Deformed," for instance,
is quite original in its way. I do not recollect of
ever having seen a character like that of "Hirplin
Hugh" sketched before; and yet there is scarcely a
village in all Scotland but can furnish a similar one.
It is admirably portrayed. Indeed, all the stories
are exceedingly good, being no more than copies
from breathing nature, executed with fidelity, feel-
ing, and that unaffected simplicity of language which
is an essential attribute of works of far higher pre-
tension. Should your little work meet the encou-
ragement it certainly merits, I hope you will con-

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tinue to persevere in the course you have so promisingly begun.'

'LOCHEND, *March 11th*, 1837.

'DEAR SIR,—I received, a few days ago, your letter of the 1st March; and I should have felt the most perfect pleasure in acknowledging it, had it not been for that—to me—painful piece of information which occupies a part of the first page. I never supposed myself remarkable for acuteness of feeling, and yet, I can scarcely tell how much your brother's misfortune has affected me. When I came to Leith last summer, I was a perfect stranger; I was acquainted with no human being, and I had not the slightest hope of meeting with any one to advise or befriend me. I was, moreover, perfectly ignorant of every thing connected with the business in which I was to be engaged; and, during the greater part of the morning, I felt a sort of depression from the circumstances in which I was placed, relieved only at intervals by an inclination to smile at the quixotic expedition I had undertaken. Upon the whole, I had no reason to congratulate myself upon my prospects; and it was only a consciousness that I had staked nothing upon the chances of success, which made the early part of that day at all tolerable. But, as Fortune would have it, I had been commissioned by my aunt to call at the shop in Leith, and made this the first part of my business, instead of the last, as had been

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at one time intended. Your brother was the first person I addressed; and there was a something in the unaffected frankness of his manner which gave me, almost with the first sentence he spoke, a favourable idea of his heart and general character; and after a short conversation, I could no longer resist the impulse which prompted me to communicate the occasion of my journey, and ask his advice as to the manner in which I should proceed. I did so; and I need not say how readily he interested himself in my concerns, nor need I recapitulate, though I can never forget, his kindness in afterwards conducting me through "the streets and closes, castles and palaces," of your "Modern Athens." But after what I have narrated, it can scarcely be matter of wonder if the painful question should often intrude—Is the individual who did all this, and who was then hale and healthy, now dismembered—deprived of part of one of those limbs which he used so willingly and well in pointing out the wonders of what was then to me a new world? I feel strangely inclined to dwell upon this painful subject. I too have been a sufferer from accidents, more than one of which had nearly proved fatal;" and "Misfortune's sons are brothers in distress." I might say, that I rejoice at the fortitude which he has displayed under his sufferings; but, in truth, I can rejoice at nothing connected with a misfortune the consequences of which to him must be permanent. I hope, however, that it will not desert him

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till his health is fairly and fully re-established. Let me beg to be remembered to him, and to your worthy father.

'The business part of this communication may be soon settled. I look upon the offer which you have transmitted as every way satisfactory, and, when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, highly creditable both to Mr. Shortrede and yourself. I can therefore have no hesitation in accepting it; and I shall be most ready to enter into any agreement deemed necessary for the transfer of the absolute copyright. Concerning the fifty copies which I am to have, as, with the exception of perhaps two or three, they could be of no avail in this quarter, it would be better for me if some arrangement could be made for disposing of them, and allowing me to have the money. Perhaps this might be done without any loss to either of the parties.

'About "The Watchman's Grave" we are perfectly agreed. It was among the first written, and is by no means the most "conspicuous" of the stories: your remarks as to the propriety of excluding it from the title page are therefore perfectly just. "Dr. D———" and his fraternity may be dismissed without any ceremony. And with respect to the name, though I was decidedly averse to coming directly before the public as an author till their inclination to read what I had written could be ascertained, yet, if it were to be of any real service

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to the publisher in procuring a better market, not see any reason sufficiently strong for which ing it. My name and occupation, which without a labourer, might therefore be given, is that tioning anything as to my residence; and as there may be a number of individuals bearing the same name, of whom I, from local circumstances, am probably the most obscure, I might still observation. Concerning the time at which work is to be printed, I am not, like some authors, fool enough to suppose that the stability of the world, and the salvation of its inhabitants, depend upon the printing of anything which I have written or may write; but I could wish it to be published as soon as convenient, for another reason: if the stories were to take, I might resume the same sort of writing; and time, to such a short-lived animal as man, is a thing of importance.

'I feel much indebted to you for the friendly criticism on my humble attempt at authorship with which you have favoured me; and also for the proposal which you have made of getting it noticed in the Edinburgh and provincial newspapers. Such notices, if properly managed, might produce a favourable effect, and, if I might speak my own opinion, I would say, that I know of no one so likely to succeed as yourself. My reason for saying so is simply this: if there is any merit at all in the stories, I think you have discovered where it lies; that is, in the development of some points

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of Scottish character in humble life, which have hitherto escaped the observation of those writers whose station in society placed them at too great a distance from the scene of action to admit of their discovering little peculiarities; and, as your own penetration has enabled you to make this discovery, I do think, that were you to take up, yourself, the office of critic, in one or two instances, you would be much more likely to draw public attention to the proper quarter, than if the task were left wholly to others. I have presumed to offer the above observations, partly from selfish motives, and partly from the idea, that by acting on them, you might render the publisher essential service, in lessening the risk which he must run in offering such a work to the public. Though I have thus been preferring my own wishes and opinions, perhaps too liberally, I am by no means insensible of the service which you have already done me, and I would not, upon any account, wish to press upon you what may perhaps be an irksome task—far from it. Pray remember me to your father and brother. With the misfortune of the latter I sincerely sympathize. And believe me to be, Dear Sir, yours truly,'

'A. B.'

While the fate of 'Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry' was in suspense, during the winter of 1836-7, the idea occured to the Messrs. Bethune of writing lectures on Popular or Prac-

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tical Economy; and to this, with great zeal, t
immediately applied themselves. A most inter
ting account of the composition of this work, and
the untoward circumstances in which it was I
duced, will be found in the Life of John Bethur
The original views of the writers in undertak
it, are also indicated in the following letter, wl
I present to the reader, accompanied by the gr
er part of the answer returned by their lite
friend—an answer replete with critical acu
and sound practical sense.

'LOCHEND, *July* 13, 18

'Dear Sir,—I am once more, as you will perc
at my former work—that is, giving you new tr
in the old way. As the market for fictitious
ing did not appear to be very ready, nor th
wards very tempting; as I had some spare
during the long evenings of last winter, which
anxious to improve in some way or other; and
ing moreover to make myself useful, if possib
that class to which I belong,—I was induced, ir
junction with my brother, to write Lectures on
we have called) Popular Economy. These w
at first intended to deliver personally, as is
somewhere in the accompanying manuscript
somehow or other we abandoned this scheme, a
solved, after revising them, to submit them t
as a friend, who having already performed

* Life and Poems of John Bethune, second edition, p. 63—7

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vice for one of the authors, might perhaps be prevailed on to extend his favour to both. To the last part of this resolution, as it involved no sacrifice, we have adhered; but no systematic revision has been attempted. When the winter evenings were gone, our time for such occupations was in a great measure gone also. But if revision is absolutely indispensable to their publication, by the assistance of a literary friend—one accustomed to write for the press—I think we might still accomplish it.

'With respect to the Lectures themselves, there are some parts of them which you will perhaps deem *ultra*, and others uncalled for; and yet we have adverted to nothing the tendency of which did not appear to us evidently bad. The station which we occupy however must have given us a view of some subjects rather different from that which has been presented to you; and this being the case, we cannot expect you to coincide in all our opinions, though with some of them I feel moderately certain that you will agree.

'As to the disposing of the manuscript, should it not answer the firm of Mr. Shortrede, which is highly probable, if you would show it to any other publishers in whose line of business it may more immediately lie, and try to collect their opinions as to what they would be willing to give, you would confer a very great favour on its authors. As we do not wish to dispose of the absolute copyright, we would prefer an offer for one or two editions, con-

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sisting of a limited number of copies. Offers ho
ever might be made both ways, if publishers w
so inclined. And if an agreement could be ma
at an early period, it would be of considerable i
portance to us on the following account. My f
ther and mother, through the caprice of an indiv
dual who has lately purchased the estate on whic
they live, must remove at the first term from th
house which they have occupied for the last twenty
four years. They are now very infirm, and unabl
to bear the fatigue of either far or frequent remov-
als, to save them from which, we have feued a small
piece of ground near Newburgh, and are now busy
making preparations for building a house for them.
To accomplish this, we must perform at least one
half of the mason and nearly the whole of the wright
work ourselves; and even then, as materials at the
cheapest are expensive, we shall hardly be able to
finish it. Several circumstances have contributed to
make our joint savings smaller than otherwise they
would have been. Some serious accidents, by which
I was incapacitated for work for a length of time—
some attempts, perhaps foolish ones, to relieve the
necessities of others, and the very trifling rewards
for labour in this part of the country, often not
more than 7s. or 7s. 6d. a-week,—these with the re-
sponsibility of providing for two aged individuals,
for the last eight or ten years, have all been against
us in the way of saving money. And though we
have nearly enough for the outside work of our pro-

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posed erection—that is to say, though we can make it habitable—unless an additional sum can be procured, we cannot finish it within; and as this can never be done so conveniently afterwards, if anything could be made of the Lectures, it would be most acceptable at the present juncture.

'I would also be inclined to think the present a most favourable period for the publication of such a work: because, as people will not pay for medicine till they are aware of some disease; so, in other matters, they never think of seeking a remedy till they feel that they are suffering either from the effects of their own misconduct, or the misconduct of others. The distress which at present prevails in the manufacturing districts, and, in short, among the great body of the labouring population, is operating as a stimulus to enquiry. For this reason, if the work were ever to be published, I do think a publisher would find his account in pushing it forward.

'Dear Sir, I have now told you an "unvarnished tale." I have told you the plain truth, with the full conviction before me, that for a man to confess he is in want of money is, in other words, to tell the world that he is a fool, and deserves only to be treated with contempt; but as I have already experienced much kindness, and, withal, seen nothing of that policy, so frequently to be met with elsewhere, in the family to which you belong, I have done this without hesitation. I remain, Dear Sir, Your much-indebted, very humble servant, A. B.'

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EDINBURGH, July

'Dear Sir,—I hasten to acknowledge [illegible]
your packet, which reached me only [illegible]
having been accidentally detained a [illegible]
ther's shop. Before adverting to its [illegible]
contents, I have again to apologise for [illegible]
lence, and for the sickening delay in [illegible]
tion of the Tales, which is well calculated [illegible]
in you a suspicion of our supineness in [illegible]
taking. This, however, is not the case—for the
work would have proceeded with regularity and
speed, had nothing occured to interefere with its
progress. I did not think it would serve any pur-
pose to communicate with you before the printing
had begun; although now I blame myself for not
having done so—as a few lines might have gone
far to allay a feeling of anxiety proverbial to your
tribe in like circumstances, and but too justifiable
by the distressing circumstances in which I regret
to learn you are placed.

'In a former communication you mentioned,
and, in your last it is painfully apparent, that the
price of the books would be much more acceptable
to you than the books themselves. I showed Mr.
Shortrede your letter. He expressed himself per-
fectly willing to accede to the terms you preferred,
and said he would remit the price of the first fifty
copies that could be disposed of. So far this was
satisfactory. But as it is evident from your last,
that in present exigences even a portion of the

[illegible] ceip
[illegible] t nig
[illegible] my fa
[illegible] eresting
[illegible] long si-
[illegible] publica-
[illegible] to beget
[illegible] under-

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price would be of service to you, I represented the matter to Mr. Shortrede, who has directed me to enclose you five pounds to account of the price of the copyright of the Tales. I hope this will afford you some relief. You can acknowledge receipt in your next communication. By the way, I think it would be more to your advantage were you to give up the idea of making a bargain with Mr. Shortrede. I would recommend you simply to hand over to him the copyright of the Tales as a gift, leaving the price to his own liberality. As I will guarantee the value of the fifty copies, you can be no loser by such a step; and should the book succeed, the author will not be forgotten.

'The first of the Tales is now in types, a proof of which I send you herewith; not certainly for your revision, as that would create delay and expense—but as a specimen of the internal appearance of the book, and to convince you that something has been done with it. I have taken considerable liberties with your lucubrations, as you will perceive, but not to the extent I meditate, although sufficient, I doubt not, to convince you that we "trusty brothers of the trade" do not look upon you authors as immaculate any more than ourselves. The arrangement I have entirely altered—and, contrary to the usual custom, have placed the "Deformed" foot foremost. Whether I am right in this or not, is a different question; but the sketch is a good one in the main—and there is no great harm if it

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should be succeeded by a better. The heavily and parts of your
have also thought proper to re-christen, infinitely faulty, which
stituted "Lilias" for "Lizzy," as infinitely more withal
poetical and pleasing to "ears polite," parts of your
equally Scottish. There are some faulty pages which
style of composition which I consider over many places
may be apparent to any one going over many heavy
less critically than I have done. In many clearly
it is redundant, expressing in a round-about, The
manner what might have been much more
and effectively stated in a very few words. For
introductory part of the "Deformed," for instance,
appears to me to be incoherent and patched; as
if the writer had not, in writing it, implicitly ad-
hered to the rule of first knowing his own meaning,
and then stating it as clearly as possible to the
comprehension of his reader—eking and cobbling
it occasionally as new ideas were suggested by the
subject. It is mouthy, *i. e.* it is too like those con-
cocted harangues, "full of sound and fury," which
are so frequently delivered at public meetings. It
is flighty and figurative to excess; and it would
have been more adapted to the place it occupies,
had it been clothed in the simplicity which is so
becoming in a homely narrative. As it stands, it
is like introducing a simple ballad with a flourish
of drums and trumpets. It is an attempt beyond
yourself, in which, with all deference, I think you,
in common with all who have made such attempts,
have failed. I cannot alter it for the life me: in

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the words of Ben Jonson, "a sponge dipt in ink would do the business." It is not to be compared with the description of Hugh's childhood; and why? simply because you copied the one from nature, and produced a graphic and true picture; while the other is an attempt to portray some dim and indistinct notions floating in your mind, which you yourself did not understand—producing a hypothesis made up of a compilation of trite sentences strung together in sounding language. However, if it cannot be altered and smoothed down, it may stand as it is; for there is a glitter about it that will please the multitude. This inflated style prevails in several other portions of the story, which are sufficiently pointed out by the corrections. I have also to object to the frequent use you make of long-winded words—such as "absinthiated," which is more than once introduced. It is seldom to be met with in modern literature, particularly in works of fancy; and therefore, all such obselete terms I humbly think, it would be advisable to avoid. Instead of producing the effect contemplated, they only impart stiffness to composition. Another complaint is, that frequently the same idea is twice stated in a sentence; and yet couched in such terms that you must have been quite unconscious of it yourself. One, amongst several instances, occurs at p. 42 of proof, where the very same, very simple conclusion is mystified by an unnecessary repetition of the same idea. I need not recommend

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you to adopt that simplicity of style which constitutes the perfection of Addison, Goldsmith, &c.; for the evidence borne by portions of your writings is sufficient to convince me that you can improve it well; but it is a mistake, if you think that the force of your narrative, or the vigour of your language, by couching it in high-flown or verbose language. Something must also be done with the advocate's address to the jury, which many of the respects unlawyer-like, and to which is in some above remarks are more or less applicable. The beginning of it particularly must be condensed—somewhat after the fashion of the paragraph I have written, although it is not the thing either. I have not gone over the whole of the story, but will have done so by the time of your arrival here, should you come. The introduction of more dialogue throughout the tale would have considerably relieved the heaviness which generally prevails in mere narrative.—The blemishes I have thus in a general way endeavoured to point out have, perhaps, been treated rather harshly, considering how trifling they are; but you will allow that it is much better they should be so handled before publication, than be left to the merciless cutting and maiming of small literary anatomists when the book gets into the hands of the public. It is not my province to notice any of the beauties of the story here, nor can my opinion be of any moment; and yet I may be permitted to observe, that it appears to me to be

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a picture from nature—from real life; containing much original observation—"a quality to which," as Sir Walter Scott has somewhere remarked, "all other qualities are as dust in the balance." I was at one time thinking to add mottoes to the Tales respectively, if it did not give them too bibliographic an air. It could be easily done. One, for instance, to the following tune, occurs in the Twelfth Night, and is somewhat appropriate to "The Deformed"—

> "In nature there's no blemish, but the mind;
> None can be called deformed, but the unkind:
> Virtue is beauty; but the beauteous-evil
> Are empty trunks, o'erflourish'd by the devil."

The lines in Gray's Elegy, beginning,

> "Let not ambition mock their humble toil,
> Their homely joys and destiny obscure,
> Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
> The short and simple annals of the poor."

although stale enough are yet highly appropriate to the book, and might, if a better cannot be found, be inserted in the title page. I think it would not be out of place, to put some small prefatory paragraph at the beginning of the volume, alluding to the author and his position in the world, without, of course, mentioning localities. I think it would be extremely proper to do so—for many would be inclined to read and purchase a book written under so many disadvantages as you have experienced;

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and I think it would be your interest,—for while people might willingly acknowledge be as good as the generality of such productions, when they knew the humble quarter from which they emanate, they would be thought extraordinary productions in the circumstances—as I think they are. Therefore, something brief, manly, and to the point (not after the fashion of those quacks who frequently venture before the public with poverty and want of education as their sole recommendation) might very properly be adopted. If you think favourably of this, you can furnish me with materials, and I shall try to put them together in the language of a second person. I think I shall get Robert Chambers to notice the book when it comes out, which may be of some use. I calculate the whole affair will make a volume of about 400 pages, and the price in all likelihood will not exceed four shillings. I think my father may dispose of a good many copies, and a few of my own acquaintances, who feel interested in the book, will become purchasers; and, in one way or another, I think we will contrive to annihilate the fifty copies amongst us, and then the publishers may do the rest themselves. Some delay has already taken place in correcting the proofs; and still farther delay must be incurred in going carefully over the manuscripts—which method I prefer, in order to save the very great expense of correcting in the types. I shall, however, get on with them as dili-

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gently as my scanty leisure will permit, and endeavour to keep the compositors at work.

'Into the Lectures, of course, I have as yet had no opportunity of looking farther than a slight glance here and there. I like the project well enough, and think it would do very well, provided you do not get too red-hot in your political speculations. A plain, common-sense, practical dissertation on Economy—that sure but severe nurse of present independence and future opulence—suited to the necessities of the classes for whom it is intended, would be of the highest service in promoting their comfort and happiness; and could it be brought into effective operation, and subdue the stubborn predilections of human nature which custom has rendered almost invulnerable, you would do more for the welfare of a portion of mankind, at least, than all the reform schemes that have ever been concocted. "We think too meanly of those things which habit has made common, otherwise we should correct many of them." So said Henry Mackenzie, the Man of Feeling; and he never said any thing more simply and beautifully true. I do not think it the province of such a treatise as the title of your book professes, to trench on the dangerous field of high political speculations. In these fiery times, we have too many wise-acres who "sit by the fire, and presume to know what is done in the capitol." Nor do I think that, moving in a sphere so circumscribed,

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you can be thoroughly qualified for such a task. But, with the talents for observation, and the power of industrious application, you possess, you are well calculated to succeed in the practical topic you have chosen. I have sent the manuscripts to a professional gentleman of some eminence as a lecturer on political and other sciences; whose political opinions are somewhat akin to what I suspect your own to be, and who, consequently, will be more likely to judge favourably of the work. By his decision I would be inclined to abide in offering it to any publisher. I mentioned to Mr. Shortrede what I had done, of which he approved; and should the report of the referee be favourable, and the book be in consonance with Mr. Shortrede's views, and be in unison with the tenor of the generality of the works which issue from his press—or rather, should it be such as no man of any political party or creed, whatsoever can object to reasonably—he, I think, will publish it himself. However, a short time will put it to rest. I am almost as anxious as yourself that both it and the Tales should be published as speedily as possible, and will forward their progress as far as lies in my power. Your anxiety for its publication, as far as regards yourself, is most natural, but not equally well founded, I think, in reference to those whom you expect it shall benefit; and although there is no denying the general truth of your aphorism, that few people think of a dose of salts till they have a pain in the stomach,

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yet there is one part of its applicability you seem to have forgotten. Be it remembered, that the present distress in the agricultural and manufacturing districts has arisen from the inclemency of last season and extensive failures at home and abroad; and although there is no denying that the operatives, who suffer most from these calamities, would have been better enabled to withstand the depressions of the time, had they beforehand acted up to the doctrines your book preaches, and laid by money to meet an exigency like the present,—yet I do not think it would be of so much use to them after the blow has fallen, when they are experiencing the truth of your doctrine—nor of any very great benefit to you, when they have not a morsel to put in their mouths, far less coin to purchase a book. However, this is no objection to publishing the book at this or any other crisis; for if its merits are such as are likely to benefit society, it will sell more or less successfully at any time.

'In the remarks I have thus ventured to make on your labours, I have adopted the recommendation contained in your last—that of delivering my thoughts freely; and if any of my strictures appear to you hyper-critical, or prove wrong, I must just take refuge under that convenient shelter—the frailty of human reason. In whatever light, however, your productions may be regarded, there can be but one opinion as to your perseverance; and, I assure you, I scarcely know whether the regret I

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feel for the severe trials you have had to encou
equals a sense of wonder at the intrepid indus
you have displayed among so many principally of facts,
To compose a work consisting principally of facts,
and requiring so much time and labour, must in
any case be a heavy undertaking; but a period, I
many disadvantages, and in so short a period, I
certainly look upon it as a triumph of the mind.
The benefits usually derived from such labours, and
those likely to accrue to you, I am sorry to confess,
are seldom or never adequate to repay the talent,
and what is more valuable to you, the time and la-
bour expended upon them. As the world wags in
these our times, the value of a thing consists,
not in its intrinsic merit or absolute utility, but
in what it will bring; and books are no exemp-
tion from the fact. Indeed, since time began,
there have no rewards been so proverbially preca-
rious as those of literature—authors themselves
even looking forward with more certainty and
anxiety to the attainment of that incorporeal bub-
ble, fame, than to more substantial benefits. I
would not have you, therefore, be too sanguine as
to the fruits you are likely to reap from your liter-
ary labours: at the utmost they cannot be much,
and there are chances of none at all. But do not
think I would discourage you in the exercise of the
talents with which Nature has gifted you: "this is
no world to hide virtues in," as Jack Falstaff has
it; and I think you are bound to "let your light

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shine before men"—and women also,—provided you are contented to run the risk of a very uncertain, and at best, I fear, a very meagre remuneration. I merely mention all this to caution you against indulging in too high expectations; for bitter disappointment often follows. Yet merit often has its rewards, as Fortune her freaks; and I trust you will yet experience both. Your plan of disposing of editions instead of the copyright is good and prudent, providing a publisher can be found to agree to such terms. It is not often a publisher will undergo all the risk, and pay for an edition, unless in cases where the author has a name, or where the book is of a nature that is sure to take, or where it is one of standard popularity. However, by and bye, we shall see what Mr. Shortrede has to say to your terms. If the book turns out a lucrative source, it were a pity that the author should dispose of his hard work for little value. I will offer it to other publishers if it wont suit Mr. Shortrede.

'I am highly sensible, my dear sir, of the kindness which prompted you and your brother of the blood and the lyre to offer me the honour of a dedication; but however much reason I have to be proud of a compliment so flattering, I think there are many people on whom it would more gracefully sit, and who would do infinitely more credit to your taste and discrimination than the obscure individual on whom you have so kindly offered to

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confer it. My years are too few, and my standing too low, to support those "blushing honours" which best become the brows of known and respected worth. I should like to see your effusions. I hope you practice the art more as an amusement than in the expectation of gaining either riches or applause from it, however good they be. There is nothing at so low an ebb as poetry; and unless a poet could rise up, who would diverge from the beaten path, and strike boldly out into something original, he, like Macpherson, may break his fiddle and take the leap. There are some volumes of trash go down here occasionally; but it is by catering for subscriptions, and not in the legitimate way. However, something may perhaps be done with them—don't hide your candle.

'We shall be glad to see you when it shall be convenient for you to pay a visit to this quarter; and I hope you will not be in such a hurry home as you were last season. I have never had the pleasure of meeting you; although I think I have made a tolerable acquaintance with the man from his writings. There is no correspondence in which I have ever taken greater pleasure than in yours; and I hope long and frequently to enjoy it. If you have any of your neighbours who go to, or other opportunity of communicating with, Kirkaldy, I could leave proofs and such ware with my brother Charles, at the Bank of Scotland there, and you could do the same, where they might be called for,

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and so avoid the expense of postages and carriage. My brother comes over here once a fortnight, and will be here to-morrow; so you know how to regulate, providing this plan would suit you.

'I remitted a draft on Newburgh for £5, which I hope reached you safe. I have been unable to finish this scrawl sooner. My father and brother are well—the latter about to betake himself to the country, to practise walking on a wooden understanding. They both desire to be remembered to you and Katy.'

The first draft of the the Lectures on Practical Economy, was tinged to a considerable extent with politics of a rather violent kind. The reasons which had induced the writers to give them this complexion, are graphically stated in the following letter, in answer to the one just inserted, the earlier part of which shows the excellent spirit in which the subject of this memoir had received the criticisms of his friend. Indeed, during the whole of that literary correspondence of which the reader has just seen the commencement, one knows not well which most to admire:—the fidelity and freedom, yet respectful dignity with which strictures were offered and suggestions tendered on the one hand, or the good feeling in receiving, and the readiness to be corrected shown on the other.

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'LOCHEND, *July*, 31, 1837.

'Dear Sir,—Though I acknowledged the receipt of your letter of credit in my last, I cannot forbear again recurring to the subject. Such a letter was perfectly unexpected by me; and I fear I must have given you a good deal of trouble in a quarter where I intended to give you none. I did not wish to urge Mr. Shortrede about either the publication of the Tales, or anything which he might think proper to give for them, and therefore I carefully avoided mentioning the matter in the letter which accompanied the Lectures. The money, however, is well come, and will be of considerable service, by and by. The promptness, moreover, with which you have anticipated the demand which we must necessarily have for this important article, deserves something more than a mere profession of gratitude—it deserves to be remembered. I would not however, have you to imagine, from anything which I may have said, that we are really in embarrassed circumstances. We have been too long accustomed to navigate the sea of poverty, and are too well acquainted with its coasts and currents to run aground in an ordinary gale, or to be "taken aback" by a casual shifting of the wind. Do not therefore, I entreat you, give yourself any further uneasiness on this account. With the money which we now have, we can make our new cottage at least ten degrees better than the one which we now inhabit; that is, we can erect substantial walls, and cover them with a

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water-tight roof, the last of which is a luxury to which we have been strangers for many years.

'With respect to the copyright of the Tales, I have no objection whatever to your proposal, of "handing it over to Mr. Shortrede." But is there not a sort of anomaly in having first taken five pounds, and then offering it as a "gift?" I merely mention this for your consideration; and if you think there would be no impropriety in such an offer, it may be made without delay.

'I send you, along with this, an attempt to amend the introduction to the "Deformed;" it is, I think somewhat less mouthy than the other, and should you approve of it, (if the work is not too far advanced,) it may perhaps serve as a substitute. For your criticisms, alterations, and corrections, I feel deeply indebted. The trouble which you are taking in this way, bespeaks no ordinary degree of interest. I have always been inclined to regard a friend who could point out an error, and at the same time lend his assistance in obviating it, as worth at least twenty thousand flatterers. Your observation about the "cutting and maiming of small literary anatomists," is a good argument for a severe scrutiny, previous to publication. Correct with the "spunge dipt in ink" where nothing else will do. Had it been winter, as it is summer, a pair of scissors and a coal fire might have been as effective. By adopting such a plan, some ink might be saved, and some additional warmth imparted to a room—perhaps

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about a thousandth part of a degree of Fahrenheit
This idea could hardly have occurred to any one ex-
cept a Lecturer on Economy! but now that it is fairly
suggested, it may be of some service in the proper
season. The "re-christening" of heroine I
consider in itself as a vast improvement upon the
whole story. "A commodity of good names," as
Sir Walter Scott observes, "is often very difficult to
be had;" and for this reason, I look upon the altera-
tion which you have made as the more valuable. Of
the other alterations which you have made, it would
be mere waste of time for me to say more than that
most of them are evident improvements, though in
a few instances, I think I should have almost been
led to prefer the old way, even if it had not been my
own. For example, the new address to the jury,
though considerably condensed, appears to me to
be less in keeping with the style of special pleading,
than the old. But this is nothing, or at most, only
a matter of taste; and I conclude this part of the
subject without wearying you with further remarks.

'With respect to the mottoes I think they might very appropriately be added; and from the specimens which you have sent, I believe you will have no great difficulty in selecting suitable ones. As to the "prefatory paragraph" of which you speak, "at the beginning of the volume," I could easily furnish you with the materials, if I only understood what was to be the scope of it. If you mean a sketch of my previous career, the disad-

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vantages under which I have laboured, and the difficulties which I have encountered—the only circumstances worth noticing, at least, those which would be most likely to produce any effect, such for instance, as my having been twice blown up with gunpowder in a quarry within three years, and beginning to write stories for amusement when I was too feeble to work, and my eyes too weak, from the scorching they had received, to admit of reading—these with the name, if any copies should ever reach this quarter, (a thing which cannot be altogether provided against,) would infallibly point out the individual to whom they alluded. For this reason, and as there is a sort of general interest, even in the simplest recital of such accidents, it were I think better on the title page to put "The author of no other book," for my name; in which case, the paragraph of which you speak might commence thus, "To enable the reader to judge more correctly of the present work, the publishers have thought proper to lay before him the following brief notice of its author, &c." By these means the disagreeable circumstance of apparently soliciting for the man, what might, perhaps with justice, be denied to the author, would be avoided. Altogether, the thing would appear less indelicate, and might be rendered more effective for the purpose which it is intended to serve. I may be wrong, however, in supposing this to be your meaning; but in case it should, I will, with my first leisure, draw together a few particu-

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lars from which you may select, if you think proper,
and we shall have time to consider afterwards as to
the propriety of the proposed alteration on the title
page.

'I must now correct a slight mistake into which
you seem to have fallen, with respect to the Lectures.
You over-rate my "industry," in supposing that I
am the sole author. My brother performed half
the work, as the hand-writing will convince you, if
ever you should again look into them. We were,
however, both busy enough, for it was only in last
January, if I may trust my memory, that they were
begun. As to the political speculations which form
a part of them,—in chemical phrase, they have
been subjected not only to a "red," but to a *white*
heat! The blast would have been withdrawn ere
the process had arrived at this point, had it not been
that there was no possibility of reaching the class
for which they are intended, except through the
medium of *white-heat* politics. Talk to them of re-
ligion, and they will put on a long face—confess
that it is a thing of the greatest importance to all—
and go away and forget the whole. Talk to them
of education: they will readily acknowledge that
"it's a braw thing to be weel learned," and perhaps,
begin a lamentation, which is only shorter than the
"Lamentations of Jeremiah" because they cannot
make it as long, on the ignorance of the age in which
they live; but they neither stir hand nor foot far-
ther. When you are gone, they are silent on the

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subject, and the acknowledgement and the lamentation, are with them the alpha and omega of the matter. But only speak to them of politics, and their excited countenances and kindling eyes testify in a moment how deeply they are interested. If, moreover, you have anything new to tell them, or even a new face to put upon an old story, the thing will serve them for a subject of conversation among their companions for weeks to come; and they will hardly fail to narrate the whole as faithfully as they can to their wives and families, should they have such, with the return of every evening. Politics are therefore an important feature, and an almost indespensable element in such a work. Had it consisted solely of exhortations to industry, and rules of economy, it would have been dismissed with an "Ou-ay, it's braw for him to crack that way; but if he were whaur we are, deed he wad just hae to do as we do." Thus, with most readers, the principles which the work was intended to teach, would be at once put aside, without so much as a trial—executed according to Cupar justice, before they could even be condemned. But by mixing up the science with politics, and giving it occasionally a political impetus, a different result may more reasonably be expected. In these days, no man can be considered a patriot or a friend of the poor, who is not also a politician. Every one who would wish to draw public attention must dabble in this science; at least, he will procure it most easily by such a course.

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But to do so does not require the adoption of the
lutionary principles; and the politics of any
in question, however violent they may appear, can
not without an uncommon stretch of imagination be
supposed, even by the most timid, to have such a
tendency, though by reading detached portions, one
might be led to suspect something of the kind. The
ultimate tendency of the whole was intended to be,
and I think is, to convince the masses that if they
will not reform themselves, as it is not the province,
so neither is it in the power of others to confer any
efficient reform. My brother has attacked the
Corn-Laws I believe with some severity; and I have
attempted to level a battery against that sort of
servile homage which the poor are accustomed to
bestow on the rich. The former, whatever incon-
veniencies their immediate abolition might create,
cannot, so far as I can judge, be defended on prin-
ciples of strict justice; and the bad effects of the
latter upon both classes, should by this time be evi-
dent to every one who, with only common powers
of observation and a common acquaintance with
human nature, is willing to direct his attention to
the subject. These, if I mistake not, are the most
objectionable portions of the work; and, to a cer-
tainty, they would give serious offence among the
higher orders. But then it should be remembered
that the work is intended to strike more directly
at the root of pauperism, than anything which the
most zealous supporters of the above mentioned

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class, so far as I know, have ever ventured to put forth; and as they are deeply concerned in having this evil diminished as much as possible, when their interest comes to be balanced against its politics, perhaps even they might be induced to pardon, though they could not be expected to approve. It should also be remembered, that, if by any justifiable means, we can contrive to confer property, of whatever kind, upon a greater number of individuals than were formerly possessed of it, by the same means we provide an additional guarantee for the preservation of internal peace, and the stability of our institutions. Every sort of property to be of any use must be protected; and those who have property which can only be protected by the laws, and which they may lose the moment these are infringed, will naturally exert themselves to preserve these laws in full force,—or if they are really bad, the probability is, that they will try to change them gradually and by constitutional means. But that state of society in which the whole of the wealth and property of a country is in the hands of a few, with a very large majority of its inhabitants steeped in ignorance and poverty, may always be reckoned dangerous; and it may easily be supposed that this danger will only be increased by the masses beginning to think. When want or some other cause forces reflection upon the improvident wretch, he looks up and sees others enjoying plenty, while he can scarcely live. Forgetting that his own impro-

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vidence has been the cause of his misery, and for-
getting too, the means by which the plenty of his
neighbour has been acquired, his selfishness, seconded
by ignorance, leads him to conclude that there is
injustice in the circumstance of being its possessor,
and, having nothing to lose, he is easily prepared
for playing a desperate game. He needs only some
demagogue to stuff his head with some popular ab-
surdities about community of property, or equality,
to make him a most devoted revolutionist, and at
the same time a sanguinary villain, ready to spill
blood if an opportunity should offer. In our own
country there are some individuals in this state of
preparation for mischief; and to prevent more from
getting into the same condition, and to induce as
many as possible of the labouring classes to acquire
property or money by all honourable means, was
one of the objects which the writers of the Lectures
had in view. For this purpose, those arguments
which were considered most likely to operate, were
brought forward, and all sorts of reforms have been
either connected with, or made to depend as far as
possible upon, economy.

'I feel much obliged by your friendly caution
against being too sanguine in my expectations of
success. The disappointment which often follows
extravagant hopes is indeed a bitter drug. But I
am too old in the ways of the world now, and have
been too long the step-son of Fortune, to be much
elated by appearances, or much depressed if they
should turn out empty.

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have now written, what is, for me, a very long, I fear, also, a sadly-cobbled letter. And as hoped that I would read yours "before going bed," I must now hope that you will put the tic to bed before you read mine, for I am conous that it will not bear a critical reading; t, after the critic is dismissed, I trust the man ll know how to pardon such defects. I have, oreover, been too long in getting this letter ready; ut, of late, I have had so much to do, and my atention has been so taken up with other things, hat I could not, by any possibility, manage it ooner. Hoping that this delay in returning the proof, will not occasion any serious inconvenience, I must now subscribe myself, as before, Dear Sir,
Your much indebted, and very humble servant,
'A. B.'

The gentleman our author's literary correspondent mentions having sent the manuscript of the Lectures on Practical Economy to for an opinion, was my talented and worthy friend Dr. Thomas Murray, Lecturer on Political Economy. Ever the generous friend of humble merit, he entered into the views of our authors with regard to publication, with all his characteristic ardour and disinterestedness; and while doing ample justice to the various merits of what he justly characterized as, "in the circumstances, a work perfectly wonderful," he freely pointed out some defects and excrecences which

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he deemed of quite unworthy of men o
ties, and of which he was most anxio
pages of their work cleared. In parti
desirous that it might be freed from
that had any "tendency to place one
society in hateful opposition to ano
position which the Bethunes had hitherto
the constant struggle to maint
world, and which had to
cure the means of supporting existence
with some very ungenerous and even unj
ment they had experienced from persons i
session of wealth, had tended to fret th
and led them to look with a rather unfavou
on the upper and more affluent ranks o
The poor who only catch a passing glimp
rich, as well as the rich who only catc
glimpses of the poor, must necessarily ac
one-sided and very imperfect notions of th
ter of each respectively. A freer and a la
sure of intercourse among the various
society is much to be desired, on accou
correcting and softening influence which w
be exercised on the views and feelings o
regard to the others: an effect of this
certainly produced on the subject of in th
When his intercourse with persons and wa
rank of life became more extended, ances
on under more auspicious circumst unfa
reason very much to modify those

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ws of their general character which he had been
ly led to entertain. He found that selfishness
contempt of the poor, were far from being such
ieral characteristics of the rich as he had once
posed. The expostulations and advice, and not
ast, the silent influence of his two excellent Edin-
rgh friends, no doubt tended powerfully to pro-
ice this happy revolution in his views and feelings.
Dr. Murray's opinion of the Lectures was trans-
itted to their authors, through the medium of the
riend so often referred to; on perusing which,
hey, in compliance with advice, wrote the Doctor
the following letter.

'LOCHEND, *August* 16, 1837.

'Respected Sir,—We have been kindly favoured, by Mr. ——— with a copy of your remarks upon our little work on Popular Economy; and we beg leave to assure you, that we consider ourselves highly honoured by obtaining a report so favourable, from a gentleman so well qualified to judge of it. We regard the praise which you have bestowed upon some parts of the Lectures, and the generous manner in which you have expressed an interest in their authors, as indicative of that benevolence of disposition which is the noblest characteristic of a great philosopher. Our little work was composed under considerable disadvantages; and it must, consequently, exhibit many imperfections. We are, therefore, deeply indebted to you

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for the trouble which you have taken and are now taking, to point out the errors and unsound doctrines which it may contain. We are aware that men's minds are often insensibly influenced by the circumstances with which they are surrounded; and we believe, that a moral question, as well as a physical object, may present a very different appearance by being viewed from a different position. We are therefore prepared to acknowledge, that the circumstances in which we have been placed, may have led us into many mistakes, which your superior knowledge and better opportunities of observation, will enable you to discover. We may farther remark, that, in some parts of the work, we felt it necessary to adapt our discussions, in some measure, to the condition of those for whose use it was principally intended. We do not suppose, for instance, that the proposals contained under the head of "A New System of Combination," present any improvement upon the common arrangements of society; but we are inclined to think, that they have a tendency to attract the attention of the operatives from those ruinous schemes in which they have lately been engaged, and which they are not likely to abandon, unless some other object of pursuit be presented to their view. It occurred to us, that it would be more honourable, and less dangerous, for them to attempt their purpose by fair competition, than to continue to employ those compulsory means by which

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endeavoured to accomplish it. Similar
have operated strongly upon our minds in
ves have parts of the work. It is our sincere
ious other our pages from all such matter as
ire to free may be calculated to excite unfriendly feelings be-
ay be calculated different classes of society. We would
ween the different be the principle of social intercourse
be glad to see kindness more extensively culti-
and brotherly branches of the family of mankind.
vated by all read over, with the greatest satisfac-
'We have abstract of your Lectures, which you were
tion, the abstract send for our perusal; and we were
so kind as send to discover, that our ideas of a
highly gratified moderately abtruse, coincide so nearly with
science moderately gentleman whose name must attract atten-
those of a gentleman confer importance upon, the doctrines
tion to, and confer That individuals, placed in si-
which he advocates. tuations so very different, and treating of the same
tuations so very without any previous knowledge of each
subject without opinions, should arrive so nearly at the
other's opinions, conclusions, is much more wonderful than
same conclusions, that they should differ on some points. We shall
that they should differ conceive it to be no small honour
only add, that we conceive that we have, unconsciously, adopted
to know that we so similar to your own; and, trusting
principles so similar principles may yet be more widely dis-
that these principles seminated and more generally acted upon, We
seminated and more remain, Respected Sir, your much obliged, humble
remain, Respected Sir, servants,
A. & J. BETHUNE.'

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This Letter was accompanied b
literary friend, from which the fo
tracts. It may be premised, in ex
Dr. Murray had promised to write
and specific remarks on the 'Lectu
to assist their authors in a thorou

'LOCHEND, A

'Dear Sir,—The kindness of
the promptitude with which he ha
self in the fate of the "Lectures"
of their authors, is really extraord
individual in his station, reaping
labours in teaching the same scien
such a work at all, is much; that
done so with the candour which his
bespeaks a mind uncommonly free
dices of caste and profession; and
speak of any part of it in terms so fla
than our most sanguine expectatio
warranted. We are fully aware of
of such an opinion as his, and also
owe to you for having procured it; a
remarks which I trust will be ready b
whatever objections he may have t
parts of the work, will be most carefu
by us. The greatest drawback, I fe
want of time to alter and rewrite, be
the end of autumn—the period at w
the work should be ready for publica

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t our life, in point of labour, differs but little
n that of galley-slaves. We leave home by five
ock every morning, and it is always nearly eight
he evening before we can accomplish our return.
er being thus disciplined for the day, the mind
omes inert, and unfit for following out any con-
ted train of thinking: indeed mine is sufficently
at present, as I believe this letter will testify,
m the effects of an attack of influenza, or some
h complaint, which tied me hand and foot the
er day; and so far from having the two hands
l two feet of which I am at present possessed
s rendered useless, I should be the better for
r hands, like the fabled giants, and at least as
ny feet, if they could enable me to walk any fast-
: as for more heads, unless they should be better
n the thing I have just now upon my shoulders,
hink they would be only a burden.—Pardon this
fling. I can write nothing at present, and there-
e I am writing anything.—Harvest too is coming
, and as I am engaged for the season, and must
rk at least fourteen hours every day, while it lasts,
th one hour more of travelling, I fear I shall be
le to do little in a literary way; but nevertheless,
turn the "Lectures" as soon as Dr. Murray's opi-
on of them can be got ready, and we will use our
most endeavours to make them less objectionable
d more suited to his views,—after which they will
ll into your own hands to be ex-punged and ink-
unged as you may think proper.

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"Along with this, I send you some "
ten in the prospect of Leaving Early H
were produced last year, when that
real though the event did not then ta
they may now serve to give you some
habitation which we are about to leave
some trouble and yet I think they wou
be revised. I send also, "The Voice
and "A Poor Man's Funeral." These
form part of the proposed "Pictures
of which there are a number of others,
to search them out. But as the Mus
men—were never set to such work
take the censure which such things
upon myself, leaving them free to rea
of fame elsewhere. Your deeply inde
humble servant,

At Martinmas, 1835, John Bethune
the situation of overseer at Inchrye,
better, it appears, offering, his broth
had accompanied him in the capacity o
assistant. This appeared for a short ti
little brightening to their fortunes.
was more liberal than he had hitherto
the labour of both would probably be
ful than much they had had to submi
However, in the ensuing summer, the
into the hands of a new proprietor, a
mediately the overseer received intim

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would not be required beyond the year for
he was engaged. The house at Lochend,
hey had resided from boyhood, was situated
propperty, and in a short time they received
from the new proprietor that it too must be
The feelings of both the brothers seem to
een deeply wounded by the treatment they
d from this individual; and certainly, to say
ast, in the course he pursued towards them
es not seem to have shown much sympathy with
ble worth, not to speak of earning for himself
rels as a patron of literature. With minds galled
this, and somewhat similar treatment received by
e younger of the brothers in another quarter,* it
as no great wonder if the first draft of 'Lectures
n Practical Economy,' the production of the en-
uing winter, was tinged with some asperity in re-
;ard to the wealthier classes.

Having thus, as the reader will have gathered from the preceding correspondence, to look out for a new habitation, and wishing to obtain one in the occupation of which they would not be liable to be disturbed by the caprice of a proprietor, they obtained a feu of a piece of ground (one-fourth of an acre) from D. Maitland Macgill Crichton Esq., of Rankeillour, on the Back-hill of Ormiston, better known by the name of Mountpleasant, immediately above the town of Newburgh. Here, in the summer

* See Life of John Bethune, second Edition, p. 65—67.

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of 1837, by 'desperate exertion and economy,' reared a house of two stories, thirty-six fe length, by twenty in breadth, performing great both of the mason and wright work with thei hands; which they were obliged to do, or i themselves deeply in debt, having had onl in money and two bolls of meal to commenc Notwithstanding the little assistance they w to obtain from tradesmen, the building and up are substantial and workman-like; a house, with its many interesting and man cholv associations, will, it is to be hope for ages, not the least impressive monume indomitable energy, skill, and perseveran extraordinary brothers.

Hither the family removed on the 9th ber. The house, it is to be feared, wa very unfit state for being inhabited. The had been laid only on the 26th of July near the end of September ere the (an earthen one) was laid, and the wal So short a time intervening, and in th year too, the house must have been in when they came to occupy it—a circur could not but operate very unfavou health of the inmates. Of this the impression on the mind of Mr. Beth aunt; and either she, or their kind r Ferguson, remarked to the writer, t had never been all in the enjoyment coming to occupy their new dwellir

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y in December, the 'Lectures on Practical
ny,' were returned to their authors, accom-
by the extended and very valuable criticisms
Murray, in which he recommended the omis-
whatever bore on party politics, or indicated
by of feeling. Along with his remarks he
sent them the printed abstract of his own
es, accompanied by a letter, in which he spoke
ir 'ideas of Economy and Capital as being
y original and useful,' and stated that 'they
so far as known to him, the first writers who
eated these subjects in a proper light.'

authors now set to work in earnest in re-
ing the Lectures agreeably to the suggestions
ad received. For this the severe and pro-
l snow storm which began in the early part
uary 1838, afforded them much leisure.

he midst of their labours, however, the writers
nterrupted by the demise of their father, who,
, few days' illness, died on the 8th February.
l long been in a very weakly state, and un-
perform any other than the lightest sort of
or labour; and his sons, through all their
tunes, had struggled hard to provide for his
ance and comfort during his declining years,
particular, under their extraordinary exer-
in rearing the house they now occupied, had
greatly sustained by the thought that they
preparing an asylum which he and their other
d parent might enjoy in undisturbed posses-

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VERSES ON THAT OCCASION

sion during the remainder of their
little thought, probably, that the re
of one of these were to be so few.
Alexander's feelings on this occasion
in some verses, among which the follow

* * * * *

* * Shall I, Alas! * *

* * * *

'No longer hear the friendly tone,
Which welcomed me of yore
From many a wet and stormy day,
At the paternal door?

'No longer see the evening fire,
By thee replenished well,
As from the cold and biting frost
I came, when evening fell?

'No longer see thy aged form
Pass to the cottage door,
Or move, with gentle step, and slow
Across the dusky floor,

'As from its place beyond the fire,
Thou brought'st some ancient book
Thy hand still firm, although thy he
With a slight tremor shook?

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'And can those hands, which busy still
Some lighter task would ply,
Nor shrink from labour to the last,
All cold and stiffened lie?

'And can that eye, which still was bright
Beneath its time-bleached brow,
Cold, lustreless, and lifeless, lie
In the lone churchyard now?

'Now in my ear a voice proclaims
At morn, and noon, and night—
No more thy word, or look, or smile
Shall make my heart feel light.

'No more for me thy task shall be,
Dry clothing to prepare,
When Winter's drenching rain had made
Such needful task thy care.'

* * * * *

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CHAPTER IV

PUBLICATION OF 'TALES AND SKETCHES OF THE PEASANTRY'—FAVOURABLE WORK—CORRESPONDENCE WITH J. AND DR. MURRAY—TERMS OF PUBLICATION TICAL ECONOMY'—VISIT OF THE TO EDINBURGH—A. BETHUNE'S VIEW IN REGARD TO HIS LITERARY LABOURS WITH 'BORDER TALES'—'THE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE'—PUBLICATION CAL ECONOMY'—NEGLECT OF THAT

The following Letter from Mr. B. friend, of date the 6th February, 1 the publication of 'Tales and Sketc tish Peasantry'; as also the appe highly favourable reviews and notice

'Fel

'My dear Sir,—The Tales are "j and I am proud to say, what I thin who have seen it, will acknowledge- is a handsome one. For one opinion opinion, in which many with myself and cordially concur—I refer you t Notice in the accompanying Newspa high credit alike to his discriminati

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nd generous, kindly feelings. In addition to this,
ıy ears have, unobserved, drank the applause be-
towed on your work by those whose opinions were
orth having and unprejudiced. Its faults too
ıve been commented on, you need not doubt; but
ese are few in number, and far more than counter-
lanced by its beauties. I have already said too
ich on that score. Mr. ——— has willingly en-
ed into the proposal that you should become a
tributor to his Border Tales—and he has promis-
o send me a parcel for you ere this departs—and
t I refer you for particulars.—I have this mo-
ıt been most agreeably interrupted by the en-
ce of a friend bearing the enclosed copy of the
enæum, containing a review of the Tales. I
ot tell you whether I am most surprised or de-
ed at this most desirable circumstance. The
r is of very high literary standing in the me-
lis; and as the review comes, unsolicited, from
en of a stranger, you have great reason to be
of it. But you can judge for yourself—and
not take up your time with my chaff when
ıve so much good corn before you. This how-
may say——that since matters have turned
favourably, or rather begun so auspiciously,
d not advise you rashly to close with Mr.
in any engagement which might in the
t degree fetter your exertions in other liter-
dertakings. This may pave the way to a
volume of Tales; and I would not—at all

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events till it is seen how your
throw away your good things u
periodical of the time. If, howe
resources sufficient, which I doul
them and keep something good in
no means should hesitate to becom
It is always a marrow bone to pick
i' hand is worth twa in bush." I
ment received ————'s parcel, wh
contain a copy of the Border Tales.
ing in upon you—I hope you will be
plish it all. I beg you will let me
script you may send for their work
read and despatch to them with
Your compunctious visitings about
credit of the book, you ought to se
about. I regret that your brothe
should not bring him all the credi
think, however, you will not cast o

The following extract from the l
thune, will explain the allusions, i
letter, to his contributions to the M
lished. 'In the composition of th
at first intended that he, (John,) sh
a larger share, but circumstances
from doing so; and "The Dedicatio
and Fall of the Ghost," "A Wish
Death," and "An Infant's Death
only contributions. * * * *

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being no part of the object of its obscure authors when they undertook it,' they meant the work to be published anonymously. 'The publisher, however, wished to have the name of the principal author; but on the latter representing at some length his motives for wishing to elude notice, it was given up, and nothing more was heard of the matter, till a letter announcing "the completion of the printing of the work," stated that "the name had been given after all." It was then too late to remedy the error of having given only one name; and thus the subject of the present notice was never known as the author of the pieces already mentioned, beyond his own neighbourhood.' *

The following are extracts from two replies of Mr. Bethune's to the letter given above.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *February* 10, 1838.

'Dear Sir,—I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, which came by post; and also that of the parcel which it announced. The first I received one day after date, and the last this afternoon; and if they do not "rejoice my heart" it is because at present it cannot rejoice. Eight days ago, and they would have made me happier than any other earthly thing; but within this short period I have seen my father sicken; I have watched

* Life of John Bethune, second edition, P. 63–64.

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his bed, I may say, night and d
every remedy which medical skill c
fruitless ; I have seen his lifeless
but now returned from consigning
the dust. Thus the deepest sorro
what would otherwise be, their g
are sometimes strangely blended.
I have thus so recently seen, the pa
them, and the impression which t
my spirits will, I hope, be some ex
I cannot thank you as I would wi
your kindness, and all your exertic
Do not suppose however that I am
extent of my obligation—I feel i
ving read your most friendly letter
I had for a moment half forgotten
ment, but a sad recollection was a
that one parent for whom I had toi
and written, could never more be
or thought, or writing of mine.

'The copies of the "Tales and S
have received are, in all respects
any thing which I had ventured
them. With respect to the succes
has met, or may yet meet with,
attributing it chiefly to your o
"Lectures" would have been on th
burgh before this time, had it not b
previously noticed. I was so an
with them that on the second da

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ess I had dragged myself to make an attempt, felt altogether unequal to the task. There is however much to do now, and as soon as we can ume writing, we will endeavour to finish them. e have adopted a new arrangement of the subts, and introduced some new ones—treating them the best manner we could, with only our own derstandings to trust to; but in what remains shall have plenty of prompters, for which our anks are due to yourself and Dr. Murray. I may st mention farther, that by the time the manuript reaches you again, you will find it divested f all sorts of politics and politcal feeling.

'Mr.———'s terms are "three guineas for the anuscript and copyright of eight printed pages." f you think it advisable, I will try to furnish him with a tale or two as soon as possible after having completed my present engagement. I will also endeavour to answer his communication, in an open letter, which, after having read you can close and forward, whenI return the "Lectures." In the mean time pray be so good as make some acknowledgement to him for his present, (a volume of "The Tales of the Borders,") and state the circumstances in which I now stand. I think I could still write two or three volumes of tales as large as that just published; though I dare not venture to specify the time in which it could be done—for my head will not always work when I want it.

A. B.'

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'MOUNTPLEASANT, *February* 20, 1838.

'Dear Sir,—I once more beg to trouble you with the "Lectures on Popular Economy;" and, to you, this is almost all I need say on the subject. I know you will find a publisher for them, if the thing is at all possible. It has struck me, just now, that it might be of some advantage to have every Lecture divided into Sections, with a short and appropriate name. That on Marriage, for instance, might be divided thus:—Section I., Introductory Remarks; Section II., Errors of the Young with respect to Marriage; Section III., Hardships which early Marriages commonly produce to the parties, &c., &c. Were the whole thus divided, with "Contents" at the beginning, the reader, after having read the work once, would be enabled at any future period to find those portions of it to which he might wish to refer, with comparative ease. Not being skilful in these matters, I merely mention the subject for your consideration; and if you deem such an arrangement proper—should Mr. Shortrede be willing to run the risk of publishing—I think we may draw on your friendship for the making of it. Even if you should be obliged to seek elsewhere for a publisher, perhaps you could still favour us with your assistance in this respect; or, if that is incompatible with your other engagements, let us have your advice, and with this we will endeavour to do the best we can I hope, however, Mr. Shortrede may be induced t

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ke the work; in which case, farther care
part will be unnecessary.

ight be of the last importance to have Dr.
's opinion still; but, after what he has
done, and when the laborious life which he
considered, it would be, in us, presumption
ntolerably presuming, to trouble him again.

I fear that I, in particular, have availed
of his kindness to an unjustifiable extent
, by quoting too largely from his "Sum-
in the concluding part of the Lecture on
ge. But his views and sentiments seemed
of so much importance in the path I was
g, that I could not prevail upon myself to
rwise. I have quoted as from the "Edin-
Chronicle"—not venturing to state the man-
which we came by the "Summary," lest
ld look like arrogance. I much doubt,
r, some apology would be necessary for
quotations; and, to say truth, I do not
well how to make it. You will also see
quotations, but as these are from books
ave been fairly given to the public, I sup-
here is no great matter—the thing seems
fashionable. You will now find the Lec-
ntirely free from politics. Economy is uni-
spoken of either as a science or a virtue;
atever errors they may contain, I scarcely
ny individual, or any portion of the public
ould possibly find fault with them on that

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score. Having said this much, I would only request, farther, the favour of a few lines, with your first leisure, to satisfy us as to the safe arrival of the manuscripts.

'I regret, exceedingly, not having seen the books with which you have kindly favoured us, before commencing the work at first. With such assistance, the task would have been rendered easy; and, it is probable, too, it might have been performed in better style, though I am not certain that it would have been more original; and with this thought we must endeavour to comfort ourselves for the little information we could procure on a subject of which we presumed to treat. But, if the present attempt should meet with any share of public approbation, as there is a number of subjects connected with Economy left untouched, these stores of knowledge may be made available at some future period. We have not yet found time to master Adam Smith; he will, however, be read with great care, and returned when this is accomplished.

'I can now tell you an anecdote of your foster-child, which I think will not displease you. Some copies of the "Edinburgh Chronicle," it seems, come to Newburgh. By accident, some one had discovered the review of the "Tales and Sketches" which that paper contained, and the story ran. The paper was handed from house to house, and from man to man, till the whole was

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made public. On the following day, the door of a quiet stationer, a Mr. Wood, who, hitherto, has dealt almost exclusively in school-books, cheap periodicals, and writing paper, was besieged by a number of persons enquiring after the book. In this emergency, he despatched a letter to Perth, for what was deemed an adequate supply; but there, only one copy could be obtained; and, on the day after its arrival, my brother saw a letter lying in his shop addressed to "Fraser and Co. Edinburgh," which he intended to send off with the guard of one of the Perth coaches. He, at this time, regretted his not having been able to procure a supply of the books, to throw in upon the good people of Newburgh, when the mania was at its height. How the matter terminated I know not, but so far all was highly pleasing to me, and I trust it will not be displeasing to you. Really I cannot forbear expressing a wish that you would be so kind as to acquaint Dr. Murray with this circumstance. To a mind like his, I am sure it would be pleasing to know that his benevolent exertions have not been made in vain. Up to this time, I had never supposed that any review, however powerfully written, could have produced half the effect.

'As the Lectures are now arranged, the 1st, 2d, and 4th, are my brother's; the Preface, the 3d, 5th, 6th, and 7th, are mine. This will enable you, wherever you find a "saddle" to put it "on the back of the right horse." My brother wishes me to send his

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compliments to you; but not having seen t
know not what space they might occupy, an
have little room left, I suppose they must
where they are.

A

From among the many favourable notices
'Tales and Sketches' which appeared shortl
their publication, I shall select one or two ex
which, while they embody the feelings tha
naturally be excited by the appearance of
work, from such a quarter, seem at the same t
most discriminately characteristic of the m
the book. The first is from the 'Fifeshir
nal:'—

'Did we know nothing whatever of the a
this little volume, we should not hesitate
nounce him a person of no ordinary genir
delineations are so truthful—his sense of tl
ties of inanimate nature so lively—his pe
of character so acute—and, above all, hi
from beginning to end, indicates, what i
utilitarian times is so rarely to be met wi
a large measure of high moral feeling, t
could scarce have failed to characterize
possessed at once of singular talent and g
ral worth. But, as matters actually are, t
is quite a literary phenomenon. The auth
may be said without a figure—self-educated
in a very humble condition of life, nurse

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y, and having had to struggle with adversities
er which persons of inferior energy would have
e in weakness to the grave, he has at length
eeded in elevating himself to an honourable sta-
in the literary world, and is on the eve, we
ot not, of acquiring an honest and extensive
e through the country which gave him birth.
lately the admirers of native genius mourned
with the Ettrick Shepherd the Scottish muse
ued to have departed. But it is pleasing to
w that the genius of Scotland never dies. Hers
a noble-hearted peasantry; and where there is
le-heartedness there is also intellectual vigour.
heart, if it do not form, at least fires, the genius;
in the case of the individual now before us,
maxim unquestionably holds. His natural
ities are undoubtedly great, but a high sense
the excellent and honourable has, as it were,
ulated them into action. The moral has vivi-
the intellectual, and the consequence of all is,
t the peasant of Abdie has produced a work of
ich many an approved master of literature might
l be proud.'

Our next extract shall be from the generous and
ctive notice in the 'Edinburgh Chronicle:'—

The perusal of this book, just published, has
ected us more than any thing we have read for
ny years past, and has revived in our bosom re-

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collections of youth and rural manners, which, though they may be dormant for a time amid the engrossing cares of the world, can never be obliterated, and can never die. The author has taken the best way to rivet the attention, and to interest the heart, of his readers. He has unvarnished tales unfolded of the Scottish peasantry; tales drawn from his own observation and from truth, devoid of all improbability, of mawkish sentimentalism, and over-wrought character or incident.

* Mr. Bethune, who is literally, as he tells us, a labourer, lives near Newburgh in Fife, of which county, we believe, he is a native. He would certainly do honour to any rank of life; and we believe, after all, the nobility of talent, when ennobled by virtue, as in this instance, is the proudest species of nobility. We never had the gratification of seeing the author, nor do we know more of his history than he has thought it proper to unfold; but his work is enough to recommend him, and should secure him the notice both of the rich and learned. He never hitherto, he says, had a patron, nor does he seem to wish one; assuredly he deserves notice and preferment: we think that if there are persons of influence in Fife who have any sympathy with men of genius, they cannot overlook the great literary, not to say personal, claims of such a gifted individual, and thus do justice to himself and honour to themselves. Such a man in such circumstances is seldom to

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and ought not to be lost. We feel confident, e present volume will be so well received, ether the author continue a labourer or not, it some other, perhaps even better, work his pen.'

the following extract from 'Chambers' Jour- the writer indicates, what I am inclined to ard as Alexander Bethune's greatest forte as delineator of human life—delicacy in painting gentler emotions of the female mind.

'While it is impossible to avoid being favour- ly affected towards a poor but honest man under e circumstances above described, we believe our- lves to be quite independent of all such feelings hen we recommend Mr. Bethune's productions to otice on account of their literary merits. Of the xcellence of his verses, our readers are already nabled to judge :* the above tale, *(The Deformed,)* though necessarily abridged to suit our pages, will also serve to impress a respectful opinion of his prose. It does not, however, afford any idea of a certain power of describing external nature, which the author possesses in an extraordinary degree, nor the almost unrivalled delicacy, as we cannot help calling it, with which he paints all the gentler emotions of the female mind, and of which many

* Two Sonnets of his, had been introduced into a previous number of the Journal.

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examples occur throughout the volume. ral, his pictures of rural life and characte to us remarkably true, as well as pleasing

The success of this, his first publicatio momentary brightening to the fortunes ander Bethune. While his engagement publisher of the 'Border Tales,' and the of the publication of a small volume of p lected from the compositions of both the l which was then in contemplation by the p scribed ambition somewhat flattering pros literary employment and remuneration.

The following letter embodies a rapid, but sketch of himself, in answer to anxious en of readers of the 'Tales and Sketches,' tran to him by his literary friend :—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *March* 3,

'Dear Sir,—As I did not receive yours 21st ult., till the day after despatching t pacquet, I felt vexed at having lost that op nity of acknowledging it; but, though that w case, I must now be permitted to offer you m thanks for its contents. Your friendly cond and friendly counsels I can appreciate; and I to be benefited by both. Though, as a conseq of my father's death, I believe we have o done less in the way of scribbling than would

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otherwise been the case, you will see we have not been altogether idle, but endeavouring to do the best we could. From that father I learned to be busy—to do whatever might be done; and, where Providence interposed to thwart our schemes, to submit. By his lessons and his example I have been endeavouring to profit, now, when he is no more; and I believe the necessity which I have been under of keeping my mind in some measure engaged with literary matters, has not been without its use.

'There is no reason for either your eyes or mine being "dazzled;" the whole of the "sunshine" proceeds from those inky luminaries which glimmer in every corner of the country, though nowhere so thickly as in your own metropolis—of these you have kindly directed the rays upon a certain obscure quarter, and, for the time, they have made it bright. This is all, and I can see it well. About two years ago I read a work which had reached the second edition: with the exception of a few splendid passages, it was a chaos throughout; bombast and obscurity appeared to be its prevailing characteristics,—and yet in, "the opinions of the press," which were carefully added at the end of the book, it was spoken of as an "original production of genius," a "first-rate performance of its kind," and, "a standard work." Time, however, has, I fear, or, at least, shortly will try its "originality" and "standardability." I could, then,

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easily guess that the whole of the fame w
accrued to the author was the work of t
luminaries, or rather, of the invisible spi
direct their spheres, and, as my sight has
fered since that time, I can still see these
in the same light.

'For, a man to deal largely in his own bio
is, I fear, a sad way of fishing for fame—litt
ter than fishing with a cable; and ten to o
the fish sees the line and flies from the bait.
is, besides, but little in my history worth no
Of privations I have had my share; but who
for these things? Nevertheless I must giv
such notices of my life as will satisfy yoursel
friends. I owe you this and a thousand times
but must defer it for the present. And, in
meantime, though I can perceive that you are
jesting when you put certain questions concer
the author of the "Tales and Sketches" in
mouths of certain individuals; you may tell the
mantic damoselle, if ever she should call again—
rather, I may tell you in case she should not
that so far as I know, he is in his thirty-first
thirty-second year—too old by at least a doz
years to be at all interesting. You may also te
the maiden of a certain age, that, though unma
ried, he lately wore a coat that was out at the e
bows!—tell her this, and she will ask no more
For other inquirers, you may tell them that he i
about five feet ten inches high, and, so far as I can

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judge, of such proportions as other men; that the hair on his forehead, from that part of his upper story having been partially unroofed, is thin; that though both his eyes are still in their sockets, only one is serviceable; that his dinner in winter, year after year, was wont to be a little bannock of barley-meal with such a quantity of snow as would serve to moisten it, that is, when the last mentioned article of diet could be found, and when it could not, it frequently cost him a journey to the nearest burn to supply its place with water. I might tell you a good deal more about the habits, appearance &c., of my acquaintance, but must desist; and if these notices, notwithstanding their length, should still seem unsatisfactory, I will try to pack him up, some time or other, and send him over to Edinburgh for your inspection, A. B.'

The lively interest Dr. Murray continued to take in the literary success of the Messrs. Bethune is evinced in the following extracts from a Letter of his to their literary friend. While expressing his high sense of the honour of the proposed dedication of the 'Lectures' to him, he shows a generous anxiety that they should, if possible, be made the means of bringing the merits of their authors under the notice of some one who might have it in his power effectually to advance their fortunes.

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'HOPE PARK, EDINBURGH, 19*th March*, 183

'Dear Sir,—I was duly favoured with y
Letter of the 16th inst., and take the earliest
ment I can command to acknowledge receipt o
There is nothing that I can do that I would
willingly undertake for the Messrs. Bethune;
shall, accordingly, be most happy to see the I
sheets as they issue from the press.

'I humbly think, that the "Lectures on P
Economy" will be a most successful specul
and will do great honour to the authors. I
the work is full of original views, and can
prove signally useful. We must take ca
justice is done it on its appearance, and bri
ward its peculiar and original views bef
notice of the public. You may rest assur
in my humble way, I will do all that I can
Edinburgh and in Glasgow. * *
I regard the industrious classes there, [in G
called upon to take a peculiar interest in
Every one of the cotton-spinners there sh
a copy of it. It is calculated to give th
view of human life, and of the mechani
ciety. I shall also get my friend Mr. M'
give it a lift—in short, all that I can
however, is very little,) I shall most cor
form.

'There is another most important
luded to in your kind letter—namely
authors have expressed a wish to d

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work to me. I humbly think they are wrong in this; and that the wish proceeds rather from the kindness of their heart, than from sober reflection.

* * * * * * *

I feel mortified to see the authors—men of genius and of noble thought—condemned to live in so humble a sphere of life, and to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. I would delight to see them in a more elevated situation—a situation more congenial to their tastes, and that would afford them more ample means of intellectual culture and study. Now, could they not contrive to dedicate their book to some one who might possess both the wish and the power to withdraw them from their present laborious employment, and secure for them employment more remunerating, and more suitable to their taste and their literary character? I beg to say, that, in dedicating their work, they should have some such object in view; though I am aware how little literature and how little sympathy with literary men, exist in certain quarters. Perhaps, you will yourself reflect on the propriety of these hints, and suggest this view of the matter to the Messrs. Bethune. I need not say how proud I should feel, if the Lectures were dedicated to me. I should feel that I had been too highly honoured. Only I do beg, that you and they will consider the propriety of sending the book forth into the world under higher auspices, and making the dedication an instrument, if possible, of direct benefit to the authors.

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'Perhaps I may be allowed to state, that in
culcating the nature and value of Capital and I
dependence, in my public Lectures, I have alread
taken the opportunity of referring to the forth
coming volume of the Messrs. Bethune. I hav
done so in Dunfermline, in the presence of a thou
sand auditors; and I mean to do so in Kirkcaldy
where my class is equally numerous. I have als
done so elsewhere. And, when the work is pul
lished, I shall quote from it, and never miss a
opportunity of recommending the "Lectures o
Popular Economy." In this way I may be en
abled to do some good, as well as add to the fam
of the authors. The truth is, I feel a deep in
terest in these excellent men; and I do hope the
publications, particularly the "Lectures," will b
so well received as to realize some little capita
to them, however small: and that thus they wi
have the satisfaction of being the architects
their own independence—a circumstance that wi
confer on them equal honour and happiness.
have another plan in my mind for improving the
condition, if none more influential step forward
but of this I shall write you again.

'I beg to return their very interesting lette
which you were so kind as enclose to me. It
exceedingly interesting; indeed, peculiarly so.
am, dear Sir, yours, very faithfully,

THOMAS MURRAY.'

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The success of the Tales naturally led the authors of the 'Lectures' to expect that they might be able to turn them to some little account, in a pecuniary point of view. The 'trade,' however, were by no means so sanguine as to the success of the work as Dr. Murray, and the best offer their literary friend could obtain for the copyright was from the publisher of the former volume, to the following effect: "That the authors consign over to him the entire copyright, on condition of his paying them forty pounds when a thousand copies are sold." The specified number of copies, however, never were sold during the lifetime of either of the authors, and consequently, they did not receive a farthing for all their labour; a fact which furnishes rather a melancholy illustration of the state of public taste and feeling, in regard to a subject of so much importance to the individual and social well-being of the community.

The authors' acceptance of the above offer was conveyed in a letter from Alexander, the following extracts from which imbody some interesting facts respecting the pecuniary difficulties of the Bethunes, connected with the building of their house, and highly characteristic of their independence of spirit:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *March 27th*, 1838.

'*Dear Sir*,—Lest our avarice, as expressed in some former letters, should appear unaccountable, though nearly half asleep, I shall here endeavour

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to give you some account of its cause. Last summer we commenced building a house, with only £30. The additional £5. which you were so kind as send us, led us to deviate from our first intention, and make the house two stories instead of one. Our motive for doing so was a wish to make the outlay productive, if possible. As the roofing would have been the same, it was only a little more expense on the walls, and then, if ever we should be able to finish the upper part, it would bring a rent. After this determination was come to, we prosecuted our scheme with a perseverance which almost amounted to desperation, and completed it without debt. But, to make the lower part as comfortable as possible for those for whose accommodation it was principally intended, every farthing which could be rendered available was expended, and we came to our new habitation literally with empty pockets. During the first months of winter, when the weather was favourable for out-door work, we had saved something; but a period of nine weeks in which no work could be performed, and my father's illness and death, with the expenses consequent thereon, left us again empty-handed. So that, while finishing the Lectures, which was previous to the melting of the snow, the authors were living upon oaten meal and potatoes, with scarcely any addition whatever, except water and salt. Money we might have had to borrow, but it was our object and our interest to keep free from debt as far as possible.

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isis, however, is now over: we have both
ork at present than we can manage; and
our financial embarrassments were carefully
ed while they lasted, now that they are told,
ıy perhaps serve to account in some measure
; avarice which otherwise might have seemed
ıntable; and, as there is no great chance of
ıbarrassments occurring soon again, perhaps
se, and its effects may serve as the subject
st at some future period.
ugh I do not think my coming to Edinburgh
of any importance, I will try to come some
xt week, perhaps on Monday. There is no-
ı my personal appearance or conversation
ın have the slightest tendency to interest
: the former is the worse for wear, and the
onsiderably below mediocrity; and if you
yourself one of those labourers, about forty
age, which you have been accustomed to
ıe highways, (though I am little more than
you will, in all respects, have a pretty ac-
lea of me. I should, however, like to see
d, when the exertions which you have made
my very humble attempts at authorship be-
public in the most favourable point of view,
idered, this liking is easily accounted for.
ld reach Dysart by half-past seven in the
I might spend a good part of the day in
gh, cross the water again in the afternoon,
ecute a part of my homeward journey be-

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fore bed-time. From Mr. D——'s exerti
my behalf I do not anticipate much, though
certainly very kind in him so to exert hi
For this, worst of all the ill-written letters
wrote, I must request you, if possible, to pard
Yours faithfully, though now more than t
fourths asleep, A.

Early in April, the Messrs. Bethune paid
visit to Edinburgh mentioned as in contempla
in the preceding letter. After their return h
they set about the formation of a Savings Societ
Newburgh. 'I have also been labouring,' s
Alexander, 'to get a branch of the Governm
Savings Bank established in the same place. Th
were great undertakings,' continues he, 'for lit
men; and to accomplish them, people had to
canvassed, meetings called, prejudices combate
but as the things promised to be practically, I wi
I could add with certainty permanently, usefu
they were worth the labour.'

The occupations of our author during great par
of the summer of 1838, with his views and feeling
in regard to his literary labours, as well as some o
the results of these, are indicated in the following
letter:—

'Dear Sir,—I MOUNTPLEASANT, *August* 9, 1838.
tell you that this am most happy in being able to
is a rainy day! The people here

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over "the state of the weather,"
terrify themselves with apprehen-
romise of "summer and winter,
rvest," is about to fail. "If these
here will be no shearing this sea-
but, at present, I have no inclina-
ıe general lamentation as the cause
, an opportunity of answering your

perhaps, blame me for abandoning
inted I was about to do in my last
mmunication; but I scarcely think
such an abandonment wrong when
acquainted with the circumstances
Within the last four or five months,
ıearly as much of one sort and ano-
have made a volume of the ordinary
cording to Godwin's account of him-
bad work even for a professional
ıccomplish this, manual labour had
ısiderable extent neglected. Of the
I did perform, the greater part was
aking improvements about our own
ch, though the whole were necessary,
lispensable, brought no return. The
the shape of money which I had re-
long time, was the three guineas for
; of "The Young Laird;" shillings and
ast disappearing from my purse, and
'se some trifling debts had been con-

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tracted. With things in this state,
rather anxious to learn how affairs a
might thereby form some resolution wit
conduct; and when your letter c
manuscripts arrived, I had only to
two courses, namely, whether I sho
as the poor poets are said to have do
licit half-crowns as the reward of gen
title myself to demand whole crowns as
of labour. The soliciting concern I did
like. I could not, moreover, recollect ha
or suffered any thing so meritorious as to
a fitting object of charity; and therefo
solved to try the last of these alterna
Mahomet went to the mountain when the
would not come to Mahomet; so when t
would not sail with me, I resolved to sail
wind. I was to have moved somewhere in
employment, but most fortunately I recei
offer of work on the same evening, which
readily accepted. Before going to bed, I
our financial concerns, made out accounts fo
small sums of money which were owing, and
out so much as "cursing the rhyming" (in m
only, the writing) "trade," which would have
sheer loss of time, the following day saw me
ditch nearly knee-deep in mud, from which
treasure to the amount of eighteen-pence bef
quitted it. My next step was to collect the m
for my accounts, and to satisfy the demand

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far as it would go, giving them at the
promise of payment of what remained
could dig a sufficiency of treasure from
;h ; after which, I returned home to a
which labour and a consciousness of hav-
hat I conceived to be my duty rendered
s, then, is a full, true, and faithful ac-
and my doings, since I had the pleasure
n last. Hogg has somewhere spoken of
which it gave him to write and talk about
d though I am not aware of any parti-
ness for this species of writing, you see I
lied from it a pretty long paragraph—
graph I cannot conclude without telling
have got something like clothes on my
something like flesh on my bones since I
ribbling.

A. B.'

nting of 'Practical Economy,' somehow
was not commenced till about the begin-
tober. Dr. Murray looked over the work
, and, while expressing his high approba-
ie matter, as well as of the temper which
acterized it, offered some suggestions as to
nents in the arrangement of the different
ich were promptly acted on by the authors.
his remarks on the importance of a severe
rrangement in works partaking of a scien-
racter appear so just and forcible, that I
efrain from quoting a sentence or two :—

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'A treatise on Practical Economy, or any other scientific subject, should be treated mathematical each head or proposition being proved as the we proceeds, and afterwards, if referred to, assum as having been previously established, and as deniable. Thus the reader will peruse the bo with greater ease and interest, every step of reasoning taking effect on his mind and commar ing his assent, as he proceeds. The sentiments an author may be perfectly just and his princip irrefragable, and yet the composition in which th are enforced may be so disjointed, so loose in arrangement, and so broken down, instead of for ing a consecutive and harmonious train of thoug that, though they cannot but be assented to, th fall on the mind as a thrice-told tale falls on ear, without making any definite or lasting impr sion.'

To the exemplary spirit in which our authors ceived his criticisms and suggestions, Dr. Murr bears the highest testimony, in a letter to the edi of this volume.

EDINBURGH, 26th Aug., 1843

'My dear Sir,—All that I did for the Mess Bethune consisted in giving certain hints, and fering certain critical remarks, which they valu above their deserts. These remarks and hints ferred both to principles inculcated in their wo

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the Logical arrangement of their various
id candour compels me to say, that the
Bethune received these, (poor as they un-
y were, though I submitted them candidly,)
degree of ingenuousness perhaps never
Their object was truth, and they were
o listen to truth, though it might be con-
or subversive of, their own preconceived
They had no literary pride: their char-
s essentially humble, though based on a
-it of independence; and I shall ever re-
n as honourable equally for their talents
l worth.'

r our authors still intended to dedicate
to him, Dr. Murray suggested that it
her be inscribed to a gentleman, whom
holding an official situation connected
government, in the hope that it might
an effort for obtaining his influence in
procure some public situation for the
In reference to this, Dr. Murray remarks
r just quoted,—

xander Bethune, in the Life of his bro-
to an offer being made to them to pro-
an office in the excise, or some other
oyment. By referring to the biography,
id the subject there treated in a way

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which cannot be regarded but as extremely intere
ing and high-minded. Mr. A. Bethune declined
offer in the most modest yet manly terms,—in ter
that excited my admiration. Perhaps no such
stance of real self-denial ever existed. But
deeply regret that the letter to me containing
declinature on their part has been by me misla
I have spent many hours searching for it, but
cannot find it. If I can yet lay my hands on it
shall send it to you forthwith; but I fear it is lc
I fear also other letters of theirs have shared
same unworthy fate.'

This letter has not been recovered. In acc
dance with the long cherished desire of their a
thors, the Lectures were dedicated to Dr. Murra
their publication, however, did not take place
May, 1839. Meantime, both the brothers continu
to write for 'Wilson's Tales of the Borders,' a
this connexion, though the remuneration was
from high, I believe brought them as much mon
as all their other literary labours put togeth
Both brothers contributed some very graphic a
delightful tales to this publication; indeed, in t
opinion of a highly competent judge, theirs were
above the average merit of the series. 'The S
ters,' perhaps the finest of all Alexander's storie
constitutes No. 251. In regard to this beautiful
touching tale, I entirely concur in the opinion e
pressed by our author's literary friend, when
passed through his hands in manuscript:—

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slightful little tale, I must say, that of
ones you have written, it is decidedly
e. I believe it to be perfectly true—if
e credit is yours. It contains numer-
l pictures, and is full of manly, simple
which, I confess, awakened chords with-
e long, long slept. I admire your nice
appreciation of the female character,
possess to an equal degree. In these
much resembles some of the best pro-
Miss Edgeworth and Washington Irvine,
hom would be ashamed of such a story.
re other points which even they cannot
a say, you are not "what poets call a
ture." What sort of a thing you or
by such a distinction, I know not; but
pears to me that nothing but the most
re of nature, constant familiarity with
een appreciation of all her scenes and
ld have dictated or inspired those vivid,
l graphic delineations, which here, more
where else in your productions, have
n your pen.'*

ie in 1838, several poems of the Bethunes
ted into the Dublin University Magazine;
raged by what appeared a favourable
or their productions in such a *quarter,*
. and John prepared each a story, which

r will find an abstract of this tale in the Appendix.

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were duly transmitted to the editor. But ye
elapsed, and no notice whatever was taken of th
and it was not without great difficulty that t
were at last recovered from the conductors of
periodical by Alexander, in 1842. The story
by him was that entitled 'The Drunkard,' the
in 'The Scottish Peasant's Fireside.' It migh
quite as worthy of a place as many tales that
appeared in that periodical, but influence and fr
ship, fully as much as merit, rule the decision in
cases. Much preposterous sympathy for the
ships, privations, and disappointments of au
who have had to struggle with poverty, defi
education, and uncongenial circumstances, is
expressed when they are gone; but how fe
have it in their power effectively to show such
pathy, care to do so while they are living.
exercise of a little of that discrimination an
spicacity which their position certainly dema
them, the editors of periodicals, (constituting
do the medium through which so many who
to the distinction of authorship must endea
gain the public ear,) might lift from the l
humble merit the load of despondency, che
in its exertions in spite of conspiring diff
and stimulate to higher and more successful
In these remarks no particular reflection i
on the conductors of the periodical in
The Bethunes experienced treatment of a
kind from individuals connected with othe

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popular periodical press, as the reader
ith the life of John will be aware.
, in the beginning of May, 1839, the
n Practical Economy' were published;
ception by the trade and the public was
ent from what the generous literary
the authors had anticipated. The book-
Edinburgh did not subscribe for a single
nd until the sympathies of the public were
roused by the death of one of the authors,
appearance of the affecting memoir of him
ther, the work might have been considered
better than dead. That this neglect was
erved, any reader may convince himself by
ng and perusing the work, which would not
een so treated had a healthier feeling either
ard to economy or literature, possessed the
mind. But it is not works of instruction
the multitude run after, but of amusement or
abuse; and as there are too many who make
udy of practising economy, the number of those
nall who care to be told how much on doing so
ends individual comfort and independence, as
ll as national prosperity. The feelings with
ich its authors consigned their work to the public,
e indicated in the concluding sentences addressed
their fellows, the working-men of Britain. 'Its
uthors can have no object in deceiving you: they
ave suffered from all those hardships and priva-
tions which you can possibly suffer; they have been
as poor as you can possibly be; and they have the ad-

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vantage of economical and systematic management from any po
they expect neither place nor pension for no favour from any
litical party; and they look for your interest and the
great man whatever. It is your interest they wish to promote;
interest of your class which they serve you is forgotten they
and if this attempt to these ideas of the authors
can suffer nothing. If may perhaps recognise the
are correct, the public future period, and your
same principles at some children, may reap the
children, or your children's have gathered in; but to
harvest which you might ail. The whole is now in
you it can be of no not be inclined to go so far,
your hands. You may have gone; but only make
in some respects, as we perseverance you will not be
a beginning, and with sting too that every fabric
disappointed in the end. Trusting to your growing
understanding, and trust have reared it, will one day
of error, whoever may tence of truth,—we bid you
fall before the omnipot
an affectionate farewell!'

The very cold reception the 'Lectures' met with, had, as may be readily conceived, a depressing effect on the minds of their authors.* Shortly after their

* Repeated literary disappointments occurred to them about this time. 'At any other employment,' says Alexander, 'after you have performed a quantity of work, you may calculate with some certainty on receiving your reward, trifling though it may be; but in literary pursuits the mischief of the matter is, that after you have performed never so much work, and bestowed never so much pains upon it, you cannot say you have earned a single penny.

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cation, we find Alexander thus writing to his burgh friend :—'At present I believe every- g is against us in a literary way. Had the ures been selling rapidly, it might have pro- d a favourable impression on the minds of edi- , &c. But the work I suppose is not selling; what is worse, I fear it is not likely to sell. little noise indeed does it make, that scarcely a th part of the people hereabouts seem to be aware its existence. Why is it that men will purchase d read everything with avidity, but what is in- nded to benefit them? Perhaps the answer may found in the abilities of the authors not answer- g their intention. We took the wrong road, how- ver. In these days, if a man would make his way o fame, he should, in the first place, persuade people hat they are not at all to blame for their own po- verty and misfortunes—these having been wholly brought upon them by others; and, in the second place, he should arraign the government as the prime mover and the great first cause of all the misery in the country. Or he should bespatter either the Tories or the Radicals with all his might; it mat- ters little which, provided he do it consistently, be- cause in any way he identifies himself with a party, and is thus almost certain of success.'

In a letter to Dr. Murray, in reference to the same subject, he says—'I am convinced, however, that until the people begin to look upon themselves as their own regenerators, and to take the matter

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SELF-REFORM THE HOPE OF THE MASSES.

fairly into their own hands, either
be able to make them
pendent, and if they could
this, I feel confident that
able long to oppress them.
ter, I am glad to find that
the "small craft" for which
so much, should absolutely
out of the harbour, I hope
more successful, and that
in convincing the industrious classes, that it
themselves they must look, in the first place
every permanent improvement in their condit
This were indeed to confer a boon on the count
and if such a boon is conferred, we shall rejo
though our own humble attempt should be entir
forgotten.'

no government wi
er comfortable or
only be persuaded
no government wou
In this view of the
we agree; and th
h you have already
y founder before it
your own labours wi
you will one day suc

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CHAPTER V.

ILLNESS AND DEATH OF HIS BROTHER—CORRESPONDENCE CONNECTED WITH THAT EVENT—EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL—LETTERS.

ALEXANDER BETHUNE was now about to suffer a bereavement which was destined to cast a gloom over the remaining portion of his existence, and which, not improbably, hastened his own descent to the grave. Early in 1839, his brother caught a severe cold which gradually settled on his lungs and passed ultimately into confirmed phthisis. Sick of that severe, and, to such a spirit, distasteful drudgery to which he had hitherto been compelled to submit in order to obtain the bare necessaries of life, and encouraged by the prospect of remuneration (small though it was) which their connexion with the 'Border Tales' led him to indulge,—he had in the latter part of 1838 resolved on giving up manual labour, and devoting his time wholly to writing. This change in his mode of living, no doubt, made him much more susceptible of injury from changes of temperature. 'On the evening of the 28th of January, 1839, he had sat for two or

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three hours in a room thoroughly heated with stove, attending to the business of the Newbu Temperance Society, of which he was secretu the night was one of intense cold; in his eager to succeed as a writer, for months previous he scarcely passed the threshold of his own dwell and he was thus prepared in more ways than to suffer from the severity of the weather. coming out to the open air, he immediately tendency to shivering, and before he reached he had caught that fatal cold which paved th for his dismission from this world!* Duri illness, his brother attended and watched ov with a tenderness, a care, and a self-denial ever paralleled,—forgetting the demands of health, in his anxiety regarding one in wh his own seemed bound up. In order to a his wants, he gave up all labour—he condu to such places for change of air as their means would admit of—he attended hir walks, and supported him when too weak port himself—he put on his clothes in t ing to warm them for him ere he got o a proceeding, which, however much we may as indicative of fraternal affection and not but be regarded as one of great indi respected his own health. All was, h availing: the disease made rapid progre Sunday the 1st September, 1839, Jol breathed his last.

* Life of John Bethune, p. 83.

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Alexander was inconsolable. One with his bro-
r in tastes, in pursuits, in labours, in aspira-
s, his death was to him like the rending asunder
xistence. But the state of his mind on this me-
holy occasion will be best indicated by the fol-
ng extracts from a letter to his friend, Mr.
mson, and from a record of his feelings in the
of an irregular diary which he appears for
time afterwards to have kept.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *October* 1, 1839.

y very Dear Friend,—Being, as you are
, engaged with harvest work, and having but
command of my own time, I now take advan-
f what shearers call "a rimy morning," and
promises to be a wet day, for the purpose of
ing a few lines to you. It is now exactly a
since the occurrence of that never-to-be-for-
event, which cast a shadow on all my future
ts—I mean the death of my only brother;
w it is I know not, but to-day I feel even
elancholy than I have done for some time
I have no need of any thing to keep me in
f him, for he is never absent from my
s; and yet it seems as if every thing re-
he memory of the past, and brought it be-
in a fresher colouring. We had lived so
er the same roof, and nestled at night on
couch of repose—buffeted so many stormy
days in company—been so often engaged

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in the same pursuits and encountere
hardships and struggles together, that
come almost a part of each other's exis
now when I am left unaided and unfri
as it were, alone in the world. I feel as
part of myself, and all my hopes and
future enjoyment were buried with
grave. In short, it seems to me that w
made for separation, and that we s
either lived or died together. But th
decreed for us; and now when he is
only mourn his untimely fate, and er
say, The will of Heaven be done. The
regrets, you will say. But I cannot b
nor would I wish to do so, even if I co
leaving you on Monday forenoon, I re
without any inconvenience; and, to
time and shorten the road, I fell in
boy from Glasgow, who was going to
quest of employment; and as he was
the boat, and had, besides, no money
passage, I brought him along with m
him a bed for the night. I did thi
readily, from the recollection of what I
suffered from storm and darkness bef
procure shelter in Path-head. The lit
which I have just mentioned, supplied
pleasing, and, at the same time, melan
tion for a season; and the afternoon p
in fancying the feelings, the words, and

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benevolence with which my departed brother would have welcomed such a poor and unprotected stranger to a share of our humble meal, and the shelter of our humble dwelling. When these fancies began to lose their force, I felt myself growing ill; and for the next two days I experienced a sort of gloomy pleasure, from the idea that I had caught the infection of that fatal disorder of which my brother died, and that, perhaps, we might soon sleep side by side in the same churchyard, as we were wont to do in the same bed. Why I should trouble you with an account of my own melancholy musings, I know not; save that the thoughts which are uppermost in the heart, are ever readiest to flow from the lip or the pen. In this instance, however, I was deceived; and I am at present enjoying tolerable health.

'The following Lines of my much-lamented brother's, I found this morning, written in pencil upon a brown paper bag. The Lines, as it would appear, had been dashed off in a moment of poetical feeling, after it had become evident that he must leave that habitation which, in his mind, was associated with all he could know of the hopes or the fears, the joys or the sorrows of life—he having been but a mere infant when we came to reside there:—

"*Haunts of my boyhood*, and home of my youth,
Ere the *sunshine of Fancy* was shaded by Truth—

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Ye woodlands and moorlands, and v
Ye scenes of my earliest affections an
Long loved as ye have been, and love
And the friends which endeared you,
I leave you, but not in the pursuit of
I leave you, but not in the prospect o
May the God who decrees my departu
Me with poverty, sickness, and sorro

But the fullest revelation of his
and musings is to be found in t
referred to, and from which t
extracts :—

'*February* 10, *Monday*—11 *fore*
has driven me to the house. I h
gaged in removing some young g
raised from slips or cuttings wh
the month of March, nearly two y
departed brother and myself plac
each assisting the other, as we alw
bushes I should not have removed
been to get a favourable situat
apple tree which he grafted; the
performed after he was under t
which carried him hence. The tre
fore like to thrive as a last me
genuity. To-day, too, I used the
the first time since he was no m
cumstance brought a strange feel

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ancholy over my heart. About the 1st February, 1839, we had commenced our operations in the garden; but alas! what a change one short year has produced. It brought fresh to my mind the time when I was twenty-two and he was seventeen, when we began to toil late and early to improve and make perfect our little garden at Lochend, which formerly had been little better than a gravel hillock surrounded by a bank overgrown with nettles instead of a fence. From that time forward, every spring we laboured at it assiduously to bring it to something like perfection. This formed a part of our enjoyment; and though often thrown back into the gulf from which we had been struggling to extricate ourselves, in the midst of contempt, poverty, and misfortune,—hope still gilded the prospect before us with a cheering beam and pointed to some fair future day of peace, and rest, and prosperity, which was to be the reward of long years of bodily and mental toil which we had chalked out for ourselves. We regarded no undertaking as too arduous, and no task too hard; and these delusions continued to haunt us till the spoiler came; but now all is gone, and I am left alone in a world divested of its latest charm.'

'*March*, 8, 1840,—To-day the air is calm and still with a slight haze hanging on the distant hills. Not a breath of wind is stirring. The sun shines bright and warm, and it seems as if he would round the highest summit of the rocks to the southward

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without sinking beneath it;* thus
the first time this season, his cheer
throughout the day.'

'*March 29, 1840,*—*To-day the crocus*
ing been *in bloom for a fortnight*, a
Last Sabbath the whole tuft was full
and now, *there is only one flower*,
meets the sun, while the rest are droo
The auricula and narcissus are both
the whole lilies are green above the g
been pressing through for the last
Time speeds on his rapid and never
Only one year ago, and nearly about
son, these flowers were planted by my
and myself,—after the rock had been
much labour, and its place supplied
form a border for them; and now t
their leaves and blossoms as green an
they were still only in the *infancy* o
ence. The voice of spring has found
their dark and dormant cells," and aga
forth to bask in the sun;—*but* wh
planted them, and whose heart mig

* Mr. Bethune's house occupies part of
that steep acclivity on which the town of Ne
while right in front of it the rocky top of the
most perpendicularly to the height of sever
This eminence, called the hill of Ormiston, s
the sun's rays from the late dwelling of the Be
months during winter.

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been cheered and gladdened by their reviving bloom? Alas! it lacks but five days of seven months since he was laid to sleep in the dust, never again to be awakened by spring, or summer, or any returning season, till the mighty angel shall come forth and swear that time shall be no longer. The recollection of him, and of what he did and suffered has already passed away, and to all, save a very few friends, his name is a forgotten thing; but 'though all forget him, I will ne'er forget.' Every morning when I awake, every night when I lie down, every solitary meal which I swallow, the house, the garden, his vacant chair and empty clothes, and, in short, every thing with which I am surrounded, and every moment which passes, brings him freshly to my remembrance. To me the rising sun shines on loneliness, and his setting beam writes in shadows the deep and sad conviction that my most valued and almost my last friend is gone. I never feel more deserted than on Sabbath—that day of rest, which, though frequently separated throughout the week by our different employments, we always calculated on being able to spend together. When the morning till eight o'clock, or till breakfast time which with us was at that same hour, had been passed in reading some pious book, we in general went forth to take a short walk, and to contemplate the face of Nature in that repose which belonged to the sacred day. These walks and the directions we took—threading the shady

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and sheltered foot-path among the tr
along the sunny bank, according to
the year and character of the wea
fresh in my remembrance. We n
dress ourselves till it was nearly s
church; matters were in general so
we were ready to a minute; and the
to be summer, while I moved slowly
hastened to the garden for a flower
ing after me. We always sat toget
ing near the door, we were almost
of the church and first home; and
our clothes were, in general thrown
care, and laid in our chest before we
dinner. Our Sunday clothes were of
lour and the same cloth; if one got a
of dress, the other got its counterpart; one c
served us both, and consequently they were t
mixed together, as they are still. But now I m
dress and undress, and fold and unfold my part
them in utter loneliness, while his remains u
touched; except when I move them from side to si
to get at my own, or open them out to look at the
and idly ponder over the days when it was other
wise—the days when I had a brother who has now
gone down to the dust and left me friendless and
alone in a world which, since he was no more, has
scarcely a single charm to draw my attention for a
moment. On Friday last, I went to Perth to settle
with a printer, for the printing of his posthumous
works—it was a sad and melancholy journey.'

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As was to be supposed, Mr. Bethune's grief on account of his brother's death found vent in several pieces of verse, from which I select the following:—

'When evening's lengthened shadows fall
On tower, and tree, and castle wall,
Then homeward bends the toil-worn hind,
The bliss of mutual smiles to find,
The comforts of his home to share—
The blazing fire, the ready chair:
But home, alas! no more can be
With such enjoyments blessed to me.

'No friendly hand remains to greet,
No eye with welcome bright to meet:
But shadowy walls and fire extinct,
As evening bids the day-beam sink,
Give solemn welcome, still as death,
To him who yet must draw life's breath,
And stumble on, devoid of cheer,
A sad and lonely pilgrim here.

'When evening's lengthened shadows fall
On cottage roof and princely hall,
Then brothers with their brothers meet,
And kindred hearts each other greet,
And children wildly, gladly press,
To share a father's fond caress:
But home to me no more can bring
Those scenes which are life's sweetening.

'No friendly heart remains for me,
Like star to gild life's stormy sea,

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No brother, whose affection warm
The gloomy passing hours might charm.
Bereft of all who once were dear,
Whose words or looks were wont to cheer;
Parent, and friend, and brother gone,
I stand upon the earth alone.'

To Mr. Bethune's friends it was matter of regret, that the affliction produced by his brother's death should have settled into such a depth of melancholy as to overcloud the sources of solace and comfort to which the occasion warranted recourse. John Bethune's last days were cheered by a realizing faith and a humble but stedfast hope—as his life had been eminently distinguished by those graces and virtues which are the only sure indications of vital christian principle. In reference to such a one, the survivor had no reason to doubt but he had received the gracious approval of his Master, and had 'entered into the joy of his Lord.' And it is matter of regret, that he did not oftener rejoicingly realize, even under the sorrow of bereavement, the fulness of that unassailable felicity which the scriptures reveal to us as the enjoyment of the spirits of the just.

The following letter to one who had been a companion of his youth, but had several years previously removed to England, shows that he knew and could point out to others, the only unfailing source of strength either for duty or suffering; though such happier sentiments were too much

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overborne in his own case by a morbid state of feeling.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, NEAR NEWBURGH,
'FIFESHIRE, *February* 29, 1840.

'My Dear Friend,—If any advice, or opinion, or praise of mine could tend to make you press steadily forward both in your temporal and eternal concerns, it would not be a-wanting. Your ideas of "the purposes of existence," as expressed in your last letter to me, are sound and practical, and do honour both to your head and heart. Without industry and a becoming care for our worldly concerns, we can neither perform those duties which we owe to others, nor get honourably through life ourselves; and without a better and a more abiding portion, the fairest earthly prospects and the greatest earthly possessions will, in the end, be but vanity. It seems therefore—nay it certainly is—our duty, while here, to improve all those advantages which Providence may place within our reach, and to lose no honourable opportunity of bettering either our own condition or that of others; but at the same time neither to trust in our own strength nor our own righteousness; for daily experience teaches us that the one is but weakness, and a little self-examination would convince the most self-conceited that the other is rotten at the core. I, at least, must confess that I am very, very far from being able to do anything to deserve the approbation of

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Him whose eyes are purer than to behold iniquity; and, with respect to earthly trust, I have seen the object to which I was most warmly attached—that one object which was the whole world to me—withering away before my eyes and becoming a heap of senseless dust, when my own wants appeared to be the greatest. I pray God that you may never experience such a fate, and I hope you never will. Yet trust not too much to earth: rather let your hope and your trust be directed to that everlasting inheritance which is laid up for those, who, through the imputed righteousness of the Saviour, shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

'As to the management of your income and your other worldly concerns, pardon me for reminding you that steadiness is an indispensable requisite. Some people may by a sort of trick, or what is sometimes called cleverness, succeed for a time; but of all who have ever been successful in any extensive undertaking, a slight acquaintance with their character, would, I am convinced, show that steadiness of purpose, and a patient perseverance in the use of means, were the principal causes which contributed to their success. In this world, Fortune, or, more properly speaking, Providence, does not always reward those who, to our view, have toiled the hardest and done the most, with a successful termination to their labours; but still it is only on the diligent use of means for the accomplishment of an honourable purpose, that we have any

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reason to expect the blessing of Providence. Miracles have long since ceased, and therefore we must steadily and perseveringly use our own endeavours for every object which we would wish to obtain—leaving it with the Supreme Disposer of events to determine whether we are or are not to be successful: He knows best whether success or disappointment is best for us. In all this, I do not suppose that I am telling you anything but what you knew before. I hope, however, you will pardon me for simply reminding you of these things. Yours sincerely, A. B.'

The following extract from another letter to the same friend, imbodies some very interesting and characteristic traits:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *Feb.* 16*th*, 1840.

'My Dear Friend,—In your own case, you say that "works of fiction" have lost much of their charm. With me it is exactly the same. Before my brother's illness and death, I was never idle: if I had but two minutes to spare, I had a book of one sort or other in my hand; I devoured eagerly every thing which came in the way; and rather than allow a book to leave the house unread, I would have sat a whole night to read it. But, since the occurrence of this mournful event, my very nature seems to have undergone a change. During those moments which I can spare from that drudgery of

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mind and body to which, for the last five months, I have been subjected, I never think of lifting a book; I feel no inclination to do so: for me it is quite enough to dose away the short interval in melancholy musing by the fire. You kindly invite me to come and see you; and gladly would I have embraced the invitation, had it been in my power; but, though I had the wish and the will to do so a thousand times, I lack the means of doing it once. I have now lived nearly thirty-four years,* and, from the time at which I was fourteen, I cannot recollect of more than two whole days which were devoted to pleasure. On these I attended Auchtermuchty Midsummer market two successive seasons, when in my fifteenth and sixteenth years. Since then I have rarely been an hour idle, except during my brother's last illness, when I attended him, and perhaps when some friend or acquaintance whose company I valued was in the house. I should also except those seasons when deprived of the ability to work, of which, as you know, an abundance has fallen to my share. But, with these exceptions, I have rarely been an hour idle, as said above, since I was fourteen; and, if we leave the unfinished house, which you saw when here, out of the account, I am still almost as poor as when I was commencing

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CHAPTER VI.

PREPARATION OF HIS BROTHER'S POEMS FOR THE PRESS, WITH SKETCH OF HIS LIFE—SEVERE THE TASK—SUCCESS IN OBTAINING APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBERS—PUBLICATION AND HIGHLY FAVOURABLE RECEPTION OF THE WORK—DEATH OF HIS MOTHER—FEELINGS ON THAT OCCASION—FRIENDLY LETTERS OF ADVICE, &c.

At the request of a number of the friends of his deceased brother, Mr. Bethune resolved on publishing by subscription, a selection from his poems, with a sketch of his life. The views and feelings by which he was actuated in coming to this resolution, will be best learned from the following extracts of a letter to Mr. Dalgliesh, a gentleman who took a warm interest in his literary schemes, and procured upwards of a hundred subscribers for the Life and Poems.

'Respected Sir,—I herewith venture to trouble you with a quantity of manuscript, which I have copied from my much lamented brother's papers. I need hardly say, that my object in doing so, is to get your opinion as to their fitness for being offered to the public. When you were so kind as to call

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here, before the funeral, you will recollect I mentioned the subject to you. I was then sanguine in my expectations of being able to publish a small volume of his poetry, with the profits of which I had intended to place a stone over his grave. A little reflection, however, convinced me that I was by no means qualified for going through with all the canvassing necessary to get up a list of subscribers, sufficiently numerous to defray the expense of publishing; and, while I had determined to put the papers in printing condition as fast as possible, and to watch every opportunity of making them public, I had almost entirely abandoned the idea of making any attempt by subscription. Matters stood thus when, some time ago, I called upon Mr. Brodie. In the course of a short conversation, he mentioned the subject, and said, he thought there might be a possibility of disposing of a small edition by subscription and private distribution. Since then, I have seen a number of people in this neighbourhood who appeared anxious for a volume of his posthumous papers, along with a sketch of his life; and to show that it does not lie at my door, I am now ready to make the attempt. I must say, however, that I have no very sanguine expectations of success. A number of people will talk of anything, and everything, which takes nothing from them, with the greatest apparent pleasure, but whenever they must put their hands in their pockets, they are silent; and it is highly probable, that of

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those who have advised me to publish a part of my brother's papers, by far the greater number may belong to this class. Indeed, I almost expect that such will be the case. I have, however, been too long accustomed to see my own hopes, as well as the hopes of that friend who is now no more, terminate in nothing, to be at all disappointed if the present attempt should prove an entire failure.

'If I might beg so great a favour of you as the reading of the manuscript implies, I would have you to judge of it exactly as you would judge of any other production of which the author was entirely unknown; and if, after having done so, you thought that you could conscientiously recommend such a work to your friends, in the same manner as you would recommend the purchase of a printed book which you had read and they had not, I would certainly feel it as a very great obligation—otherwise, I would not wish to have a single word spoken upon the subject; nor would I wish to have a single unwilling subscriber. I have already said that my principal object in making the present attempt, is to raise a few pounds wherewith to place a stone over my brother's grave.

'Begging your pardon for having troubled you with these wearisome details, I must now be permitted to thank you for your very generous offer of assistance, at the time of my only brother's death. While I feel as much indebted to your kindness as if I had availed myself of that offer to the fullest

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[illegible] I am glad to be able to inform you, that I am still able to meet my little engagements, though I have not a single halfpenny to spare.

[illegible] your pardon once more for thus obtruding myself at such length upon your notice, I am, with the greatest respect, Sir, Your very humble servant,

A. B.

[illegible] of his brother's life, as he states in [illegible] he had set himself to compile [illegible] after his death, without any view to [illegible] though afterwards, he could not but [illegible] when such an interest was manifested [illegible] as seemed to call for, and warrant [illegible] of his brother's poems had received a [illegible] many of them were in the first [illegible]. Yet never did an editor enter on his [illegible] greater zeal, or with more reverence for [illegible] falling into his hands. Every scrap [illegible] numbered and registered, and described if it [illegible] a distinct title. Care like this was necessary, [illegible] the manuscripts were in a very chaotic state, many of them having been written on whatever fragment bearing the name of paper might come to hand. The ardour with which he applied himself to this labour of fraternal affection, furnished some antidote to his melancholy, still the state of feeling often indicated in his letters, is gloomy enough, as, for example:—'There breathes not upon earth a more solitary thing than I am

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now. Though there is little to laugh
matter, it might, perhaps, make you smi
my present mode of life. I rise, if I can m
about an hour before day-break;* kindl
bring in coals and water to serve for the
pare my breakfast; and, if the morni
vourable, go to work as soon as I hav
ency of light; if it threatens rain, I
home—and of this there has been but to
late. At night-fall, I return—write till
little of midnight—go to bed; perhaps
for nearly half of the time I should spe
and then sleep too long next morning,
casions me a sad hurry before I can get
go about. Thus one day follows anothe
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CHAPTER VI.

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now. Though there is little to laugh at in the matter, it might, perhaps, make you smile, to hear my present mode of life. I rise, if I can make it about an hour before day-break;* kindle the fire; bring in coals and water to serve for the day; prepare my breakfast; and, if the morning is favourable, go to work as soon as I have a sufficiency of light; if it threatens rain, I remain at home—and of this there has been but too much of late. At night-fall, I return—write till within a little of midnight—go to bed; perhaps lie awake for nearly half of the time I should spend there, and then sleep too long next morning, which occasions me a sad hurry before I can get ready to go about. Thus one day follows another, in the same monotonous round, with nothing to checker or to change the prospect or the scene. In all my former struggles I had hope, however distant, to cheer me on.'

In addition to the time thus stolen from the night, and those days on which he was precluded from labouring out of doors by the state of the weather, we have reason to believe he devoted to his editorial labours as much more as he could possibly spare, consistently with obtaining the necessaries of life for himself and his aged mother; for we find him writing thus, in November:—'If

* The Letter from which this is extracted bears date, December 23rd.

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accepts of the present story—the money which will free me from pressing necessity—I l once more drop labour, and devote the whole ny attention to copying, correcting, and ar- ging his [John's,] papers, and writing a sketch his life.' The story here referred to, was that tled, 'The Unexpected Meeting'; in addition vhich, we find him stating, in May, 1840, that, ıce November last, he had contributed to the order Tales," "Wreckers and Smugglers," (No. ;) "Julia Edwards," (No. 293;) "Caroline and ;) "Cousin," (No. 298;) and "A Legend of the st," (No. 308).' These Tales alone would have olved no inconsiderable amount of literary la- r; but when we think that he had, in addition this, to transcribe and correct his brother's ms, and write his Life; and at the same time ect, that all this labour was undergone by a r, solitary, disconsolate day-labourer, who had n to submit during the live-long day, to the erest drudgery, in order to procure the neces- ies of life—conflicting emotions crowd on our ds. In proportion as we admire such exer- ıs, and such strugglings, we feel a rising resent- at at that state of public feeling which could w such a man to remain in such a situation; we ask, Could nothing have been done to raise above such anxiety, and such toil, without nding even his morbid sense of independence? ere our nobles and gentry but one-tenth part

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as alive to the claims of struggling merit, as to what they deem dangers to their peculiar interests, from some contested election, or some popular agitation, we will venture to say, that Mr. Bethune needed neither have remained under the necessity of submitting to the severest drudgery for bread, nor have felt himself degraded by being treated as an object of charity.

The Life and Poems enjoyed the advantage of passing under the revision of the literary friend so often referred to, as well as the other productions of the authors. Subscribers were obtained for between 500 and 600 copies; and the impression amounting almost immediately to but 700, the remainder were most favourably disposed of. The work was reviewed at length in the "Athenæum;" the "Witness," &c.; while highly favourable notices appeared in many of the Newspapers. The reception the book met with, was far more favourable, indeed, than its editor had ventured to anticipate; and, had the impression been larger, he might have derived considerable pecuniary benefit from it; but, from the limited number of copies printed, the delay which, owing to various circumstances, occurred ere a second edition was issued, and another cause which will bye and bye be adverted to, comparatively little profit was realized.

The gratification afforded him by the favourable reception of his publication, was marred by another melancholy bereavement. His mother was seized

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with paralysis towards the end of July, and after repeated shocks, which ultimately deprived her almost entirely of the power of speech and motion, she expired on the 21st December. During the whole of her illness, her son attended and watched over her with the most affectionate and self-denying care. In a letter to the writer of this, he states, that 'for nearly five months his clothes had never been off, except to shift his shirt.' After repeatedly taxing the powers of nature to such an unwarrantable extreme, can we wonder at his own early demise?*

His feelings on this occasion are well expressed in the following letter to a friend, then engaged in tuition in England.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *December* 24, 1840.

'My Dear Friend,—After a period of the deepest anxiety, suspense, and alarm, I now take up a pen to inform you that my last remaining parent—she who was at least one of your warmest earthly friends—is now no more. The few words which I have already written, will make you acquainted with the annihilation of the last shred of that little world of domestic affection, in the midst of which

*Of the later years of his mother's life, and particularly of her last illness, Mr. Bethune has left a most touching memorial. It enters, however, too minutely into detail, to be as a whole fit for the public eye. What has appeared to the editor the more interesting portion, the reader will find in the appendix.

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I was once happy, and among the remaining ruins of which I still wished to dwell. But all is now over: the last green spot around which memory, imagination, and fancy were alike fain to linger, has for ever disappeared, and an unvariegated desert remains behind.

'For near a fortnight previous to her death, my mother had been losing her appetite, and becoming gradually worse; and after four days and four nights of great restlessness and suffering—during which she never once lay down though she was frequently in bed—at ten minutes before two on the morning of Monday the 21st curt., her spirit fled to those scenes above, from the contemplation of which she had derived her chief enjoyment through life.

'With the exception of the corn-fields, which had begun to lose somewhat of their freshness, the summer was in its very prime when she was first taken ill. She lived to see the sickly hues of autumn succeed its gorgeous colouring—the crops cut down and secured—the trees stript of their verdure—and the fields prepared for the snowy mantle of the season; but before the full dreariness and desolation of winter had set in, her spirit fled, we trust, to the bowers of an unchanging spring. Yesterday her dust was laid to rest beside that of her husband and son; and she now sleeps at the left hand of her latest born, whose untimely death she continued to lament till within a few hours of her own. Hoping that you still continue to enjoy health, and

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at the blessing of God may rest on you,
in the midst of affliction, Yours truly,
A. B.'

tter to another friend he says, 'Her dust
down to rest beside that of her "dear
as she frequently called my brother after
gone. And now, father, mother, and son,
side by side, in Abdie churchyard!—the
ittle mounds forming what may very ap-
ately be called, "The graves of a household."
present occasion I feel even more desolate
when my only brother died. Then, I had his
er, and my own, beside me; and when my
was full I could turn round to her and speak
ie subject: but how can I expect that any one
ld now have patience to hear me tell my tale
orrow.'

give the following letter from the friend in
gland referred to at the end of last chapter, both
m its value and appropriateness in regard to the
casion on which it was written, and as an indica-
on of the not altogether rare attainments of na-
ves of our country who have to earn their subsis-
ence by their daily labour:—

'BEDWELL PARK GARDENS,
HATFIELD, HERTS, *Dec.* 31, 1840.

'My Dear Friend,—I have allowed three full
days to pass away since receiving your note with
the melancholy intelligence of your beloved mo-

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ther's decease. You may perhaps think me careless in thus permitting such a length of time to pass before answering it, but, to tell you the truth, even now I scarce know how I am to do so. The tenor of some of your preceding letters was entirely such as might have led me to expect the sorrowful event: yet, while there remained even the bare possibility of recovery, hope was not extinguished, and I could not sometimes help thinking that she might yet be spared.

'I lament that it was not in my power to assist in bearing her remains to their final resting-place. It would have been a satisfaction, although a sad one, had I been able to do so. Well do I remember her parting words to me when I left Leafield: "Fare-ye-weel, Davie: I shall never see you again in this world." I thought upon these words after I had left her, and could scarce refrain from weeping. I have thought upon them a thousand times since; and even now I can fancy that I hear her pronounce them. It would have been much pleasure once more to have met her in this world, but it will be infinitely more to meet her in the world above, where she now is. She was one, and I might say the only neutral one in such circumstances, for whom I ever felt the same sort of attachment. So far back as I am capable of remembering, she was to my mind the object of veneration and affection. I have often endeavoured to trace these feelings towards her to their origin as connected with some

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early life, but I have as often failed. embrance of their commencement. interested goodness of heart, the ch she at all times manifested for the welfare of all, were amongst produced them. She is now no gh it be some consolation to think ng, in a better world, the society d in this, the mind has still to sorrow occasioned by the con- is not with us. Yes, she is gone now exists of those that bound and. Every year, as it rolls past, the bosom of eternity some one ected with the heart's best affec- which a few short hours will that sped, it is very probable that the num- who are only to be sought for in the remembrances of the mind will have been increased. But it is only adding to the present sorrow to anticipate others.

'You know better than I can tell you the only source from which comfort can be derived. Any attempt on my part to afford you consolation were far worse than useless. I am a partaker of your sorrow—I sympathize with you in your sufferings; and, were it in my power by word or deed to alleviate either, the being is not in existence that would more willingly do so.

'I shall be very anxious to hear from you. Do

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write the first spare moment you have, let it be ever so little.—Most truly Yours, D. R.'

The following appears to have been Mr. Bethune's answer:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *Feb.* 6, 1841.

'My Dear Friend,—By this time you may well accuse me of carelessness; but, though I did not answer your last, as I had intended, I have not forgotten you. Indeed, when the dark and downward tenor of my fortune for the last three years is considered, I should not be very punctual in these matters. From the 8th of Feb. 1838, to the 21st of Dec. 1840, was, as you will perceive, little more than two years and ten months; yet within this short period I had seen the whole of the little family to which I belonged, one by one, seek their last resting-place in the cold grave, from which no effort and no care of mine could save them. It seemed as if each had been in haste to follow the other who had gone before; and, at the last mentioned date, I found myself alone in a world which had become to me emphatically "a desert!" But enough—they are gone, and every hour is lessening the distance between us.

'Your last letter was soothing, and accorded well with the melancholy state of my own feelings when I received it. Indeed, the manner in which you speak of my mother could hardly fail to be grati-

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fying to any one in my circumstances. With per-
haps her own share of those failings which "flesh
is heir to," she was certainly a true and a warm
friend where she professed friendship; and I believe
he had all along regarded you with as much affec-
on as it was possible to bestow upon any one
yond the circle of her own little family. This
ing the case, you may easily conceive that it was
easing to the only individual on earth whom she
d left to mourn her loss, to find that you had not
rgotten her.

'Some time ago I was told by your mother that
ou were then busy in furnishing your house, and
iat the whole of the funds which you could muster
ad been required for this purpose. These are not
er words, but they imbody her meaning. The
hing is probably done now; but, had it been to do,
t the risk of being deemed presumptuous, I should
iave advised you to do it in a plain style, and to
ncumber yourself with nothing more than what
was necessary to your present comfort and conveni-
ence. Fair and smooth as matters may now ap-
pear, a storm may soon darken around you; and a
good seaman will always endeavour to keep his
vessel in sailing trim, whatever weather may betide.
You have already felt somewhat of the mutations
of fortune: in my own limited experience I could
number more of them than is known to the world,
and what has been before may be again. At all
vents, it is well to be provided for such occurrences,

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whether they should or should not come.
prepared for the future cannot, in the smalle
gree, detract from the enjoyment of the pre
and I hope this is the principle upon which you
I trust you still stick to temperance, and that
cause is prospering in your neighbourhood.

'A. B.

The following letters and extracts, imbodyi
friendly suggestion and caution, show that Mr. B
thune's opinion and advice on the most importa
concerns of life, were valued and looked to wi
deference by those who had intimately known h
long. The first two extracts imbody some very ju
cious observations on the proper combination
dependence on Providence, in a humble and su
missive spirit, with the exercise of individual juc
ment and enlightened personal exertion in the c
cerns of life. The letters from which they are tak
are addressed to his friend, the tutor above refer
to:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *July* 21*st*, 184

'Dear Sir,—Most sincerely do I sympathize
you in the unpleasant situation in which Provid
has at present placed you; and I only wish it
in my power to communicate something like
fort. But, alas! in this respect I am a bank
myself, and can have but little of the kind to
to others. All I can do is to add my amen to
own prayer, "that your way may be opened

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" that God may cause this shortly to work for
," Yet, while we pray to him for his aid in all
s, we should also try to avail ourselves of such
s as he may have placed within our reach, and
e that understanding with which he has en-
! us, to lighten our trials and shorten those
:s of affliction which are caused by men. While
'ouring to imitate the " harmlessness of the
we are enjoined to aim at, " the wisdom of
'pent" also. The nature of your reception
; strange; and yet if you could contrive to
under it, neither overacting nor underacting
ırt, things might soon come round again to
l channel. When people experience cold-
s certainly wise to avoid, as far as possible,
ıy just cause for its continuance, and at the
ıe, neither to appear dispirited by it nor
under it. There is, however, a sort of
ıd a propensity to make the conduct of
ɔn these occasions the subject of conversa-
h should be shunned. When accident has
into the company of one who has treated
if others be present, we try to laugh and
in very great spirits; if we are left alone
we are uncommonly dignified and silent;
n as we get his back turned, we tell the
we chance to meet, or rather every one
we converse, how little we care for him
dness, and that we should be sorry to
le thought on him. Now our doing all

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this, just serves to show how deeply v
it at the same time tends to perpetu
ness which we receive from such ca
occasions, you will find that nothing c
directly to restore one's cheerfulnes
to be really cheerful, observing at th
wards the parties, such a bearing as t
that you can live without them, and
happy either with or without the
That you may be able to do this, sa
These men are in the hand of God; I
no wrong, and, unless he permit them
prive me of the necessaries or comfo
should they deprive me of my pea
will not distress myself though oth
down upon me without a cause. I v
my case before the Lord, and with
and in his strength, I will endeavou
and cheerful as I have been before.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *Sept*

Dear Sir,—I trust the Lord will
you and your efforts for the good of
be the joy and rejoicing of your he
sons of sorrow and affliction must
tervene. Clouds and storms form
most propitious summer; and nig
the sunniest day. It is even thus v
those who are most favoured hav
and much to suffer; but, as some o

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I mistake not—has said of "crosses"—"Those o bear them best deserve them least." We ist not look for unmingled happiness on this side ernity; nor hope to find aught abiding in the idst of a scene of perpetual changes.

'Before speaking of the change of situation to hich you advert, pardon me if I should offer a ew preliminary observations. And first—Though there are no doubt particular providences which frequently lead, or rather drive us, contrary to our own inclinations, in a particular direction where we are to meet some one to whom we are to be of use, or some one who is to be useful to us; still, in the ordinary concerns of life we must exercise our own judgments, and not run into hazardous courses in the expectation that God will work a miracle to rescue us from the effects of our own rashness. Paul "wrought with his own hands" for the things of this life. He no doubt knew that God could have supplied his necessities in a miraculous way, as he did those of the Israelites in the wilderness, had it been the divine pleasure so to do; but he knew also that "in the sweat of his brow" man was to eat bread; he knew that labour, according to God's appointment, was the way in which the greater part of mankind must procure their subsistence,—and therefore he was willing to use the means and look for the end in the ordinary course of events, without expecting a miraculous intervention of Providence in his behalf. Taking this view

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of the matter, I would have you to drop all thoughts of "giving in your resignation, and expecting Providence will interfere to direct its acceptance or non-acceptance." You have doubtless read the ancient custom of uncaging a bird and directing the march of an army according to its flight, as also of shooting an arrow into the air, and pointed onward, when it fell, or the reverse, ceeding with an expedition or returning home- me it appears that there is too much of the spirit of divination—too much of a wish to pry futurity—in your project, to be in strict accord with a sound christian philosophy. The question at issue is simply this, If you do not like your sent situation, have you another in view where would expect to be more comfortable? and if have not, could you make out to live for a half a year upon your previous savings till thing of the kind should come in the way? can answer neither of these questions in firmative, then it would almost appear to be duty as well as your interest, if your present tion is at all tolerable, to try to make the it for at least a time.'

* * * * * * *

'Were we to consider what every one would and think of us upon every occasion, we scarcely ever move a single step. There is gree of firmness which is necessary to enable son to go through with even the most trifling

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and that firmness when regulated by a
ing sense of right and wrong, and ha-
ractised [maintained,] will in the end
to call forth the respect of those who
o claim to it themselves, and who at first
inclined to censure it in others. In short,
is an indispensable ingredient in the cha-
f all who would wish to reform either pub-
rivate abuses. A. B.'

following is his opinion of a notorious weekly
aper, which, to the disgrace of the English
n, it seems obtains a very wide circulation :—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *October* 27, 1840.

* * 'By the way, I do not consider that
Weekly Despatch" a good paper. Although it pos-
ses an overwhelming circulation—the greatest,
is supposed, of any newspaper in Britain—from
hat I have seen of it, it appears to have no prin-
iples, but to cater through thick and thin for the
prejudices of the most ignorant class of society,
merely to keep up its popularity. For instance,
the "Poor Laws," and "The Poor Law Amend-
ment Act," are with it inexhaustable subjects of
declamation; and, from what you say in a former
letter about "whig bastiles," I believe that it has,
in part, led even you astray. You must consider
this subject again—consider what national wealth
is, and what are its effects upon society; and you

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will find that the whole amount of the sum goes to support paupers is taken directly from fund which should give employment to indepe labourers. No enlightened well-wisher of his try could have wished to see the Poor Laws maining as they were. Previous to the Amen ment Act, they literally gave a premium u dolence and improvident marriages, while placed honest industry and independent feeli a most terrible discount.

A.

The following is from a note accompanying snuff-box which had belonged to Mr. Bethun brother, as a memorandum to a friend :—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *July* 23, 1840.

'My Dear Friend,—I now enclose for you small white-iron snuff-box which belonged to brother, with a very small quantity of the ounce of snuff which was ever bought for Had you not requested it, I should have ashamed to send you such a homely article, to quote a verse of his own, which you will see in the book,

"'Tis not the value of the gift,
As valued in the world's esteem,
Which makes the boon by Friendship left,
A thing of such importance seem."

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en in the habit of fawning upon gr
flattering them for his own interest, it
I might have been able to send y
nted snuff-box, which had been presente
Mr. This, or Sir Somebody That, or m
nething-else; but whatever his few want
it was his wish to purchase for himself
he honour of "a discerning world" be it
was allowed to do it. No one ever thought
nting him with anything which would cost
alfpenny; and he had himself too much of
ecting principle to squander his scanty earn-
pon useless finery. But, let others think
ney may, I now feel prouder of his stern and
promising independence—far prouder—than
ld have done had he been in the receipt of
s from half the great men in Fife. A. B.

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CHAPTER VII.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MRS. HILL, EMB
ON GENERAL EDUCATION, PAUPERIS
PRISON DISCIPLINE, POLITICAL ECON
TO GLASGOW—SITUATION OF TURNE
NESS—RETURN HOME.

I HAVE now to introduce to the rea
a very interesting correspondence
Bethune and Mrs. Hill, the lady of
of Prisons for Scotland, which ap
originated from a desire on Mrs. Hi
troduce him into what she conceive
situation of less hardship and grea
than that which he had hitherto o
her views in opening this correspon
best explained by a portion of one of
After expressing deep sympathy witl
sufferings, (then in her last illness,)
enquiry whether there was any way
could contribute to their alleviation,
noting of her comfort by cordials, w
&c.—which, like all similar proffers,
declined—she proceeds:—

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not know whether chance has ever brou
ou any account of the exertions that
as Inspector of Prisons for Scotland,
the reformation of "our criminal brethren."
his wife, I have no hesitation in saying
ng the five years he has been Inspector
that has been effected in the prisons o
with limited means, has been surprising;
the operation of the New Prison Act,
especial control of a General Board, (of
is a member,) insures an active and able
ent over the whole country. There are
hly-talented as well as benevolent men at
of some of the larger prisons, or applying
Governorship of them; and many able,
d efficient men over others. Excellent in-
s are also being appointed to all prisons
he prisoners are detained a considerable
Everything is being done to teach new ha-
ndustry, self-employment, and honourable
to the poor individual whose ignorance
klessness, or wretched early training, have
m the inmate of a prison. Many are the
ul anecdotes that the enlightened and be-
t Governor of the Glasgow Bridewell, Mr.
, can give of the effect of such discipline,
st interesting it is to hear them.
ild you like to aid in this good work? Of
till a personal communication, we could not
t precise situation would be most suitable for

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you; but do you feel, that to help to snat
fortunate from guilt and misery, is a great
employment? Perhaps you are not aw
the order and arrangement of a well-c
prison, is wholly different from all our old i
prison. In the separate system, no swearin
relling, or displeasing conversation assails t
The prisoner in his cell, is in the best cond
avail himself not only of the solace of in
but of books, instruction, and sympathy.
latter motive is almost wholly wanting when
ers are together; but, when separated from
companions in vice and misery, they gratefull
the value of the kindness of a judicious gov
or warder. I speak from the experience o
best informed. Perhaps you may think, that
habits of life having been so contrary to the
bitual, control, zeal, and watchfulness neces
in an officer of a prison, you might not be able
adapt yourself to so new a position. This is, h
ever, no objection. It is desirable for all the
officers, however high may be their position, to
through a regular training in the Glasgow Bri
well, for a few weeks at least, where they
practically see the working of a good system
management, where kindness and good disciplin
take the place of harshness and disorder.

'Mr. Hill begs me to tell you, that should he s
ceed in obtaining a situation for you, we are aw
that you could not afford to lose so many
we
el

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salary, but that we will undertake the necessary expenses of your residing at Glasgow, while daily attending the Bridewell, as well as your travelling expenses.

'I do not call your attention to any one particular situation—in the state your poor mother is in, you could not immediately avail yourself of one—but I wish to know your general opinion. The requisites of a good officer are manifold. From your works, and the high character we have heard of you, we have no doubt whatever of your excelling in high integrity, and moral and intellectual worth, all which qualifications are so truly desirable for the cause which we have so deeply at eart; and we have very little doubt that the ther requisites will not be wanting. These, however, can but be judged of by an interview. Our rst object is, to secure an efficient officer in the ublic service; our second, to benefit an individual ho has at once excited our respect and our mpathy; and happy shall we be, if we can combine the two objects.

'In answering my letter, will you be so good as mention any kind of labour that you think you n superintend; and whether, besides your love literature, you happen to be fond of music or wing. Weaving, I remember, you are acquainted h.

'Hoping, dear Sir, notwithstanding the sorful cloud that is yet hanging over you, that

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life has many cheering years of happiness an
fulness still in store for you,—Believe me
main, Yours, very sincerely, MARTHA H

'EDINBURGH, 25th November, 1840.'

The following letters to this lady imbo
very interesting references to Mr. Bethun
sonal history and habits, as well as his v
some very important subjects connected
improvement of the condition of the peopl

'MOUNTPLEASANT, Nov. 3

'Dear Madam,—Three days ago I recei
long and very interesting letter; and in
ledging it I can only say—as my poor b
when shown some trifling presents which
sent him as he lay dying—"that I could
believed there was so much benevolen
world!" I should have returned an ans
had it not been that I wished to delay d
I could read the whole of the "Rep
which you were so kind as to favour m
now read the greater part of it atten
though this is the case, I find that at pr
not command resolution to enable me
its particulars in such a manner as I
wished. My mother is just now consid
than she has been for some time past

* Mr. Hill's 5th Report on Priso

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suffering to her, and of sleepless and
ty to me, I have so much to distract
that I scarce know what I am writing.
in to feel somewhat weary of a world
efforts to benefit myself and others,
often frustrated; and were it not that I
if possible, "To keep a while, one pa-
e grave," at this moment I could almost
"place of refuge and repose" where, in
e of scripture, "The wicked cease from
nd the weary are at rest." If you only
imited are my wishes, and how little *I*
pect to enjoy, you would turn your bene-
rts to some other quarter, where they
likely to be rewarded with that success
so eminently deserve.

indulge no longer in useless generalities,
could not possibly leave my poor debili-
nt, with whom, as it seems, I have ex-
elationship, and who now looks up to me
nce and support with all the helplessness,
n the circumstance of her mind being affect-
l as her body—with all the simplicity of a
in the event of my surviving her, if for no-
e than to show how ready I was to adopt
e which you had pointed out, I should be
o go to the Glasgow Bridewell for the pur-
scertaining what were the duties of an ef-
ison officer. While I would pause here to
u and Mr. Hill for your generosity in offer-

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ing to bear my expenses, I would humbl
that I should consider myself bound t
myself. They would not amount to ar
sum; for my habits are still almost as
and my wants almost as few, as when
As an evidence of this, I may be all
that a pound of oatmeal made into p
pennyworth of milk, serves me regu
breakfast and supper; my dinner is
expensive; and beyond a draught of
never required any intermediate me
my ordinary fare has seldom cost
cheaper kinds of what is called pris
having seen the "working of the
thought the duties were such as I
I should then be ready thankfully
temporary appointment to some si
tion; and if I could succeed in perf
of that situation in a more creditab
had been performed by others, I
expect to be advanced. But, on
I had good reason for suspecting
perience and abilities were not s
me for the task, I would certain
were I to allow any prospect of
tage, or even the overweening k
to weigh with me in accepting
could not ultimately give sati
ployers. These are simply and
the matter: and I hope you wi

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manner in which circumstances have at present compelled me to state them.

"Though a natural propensity for trying everything which came in the way, and a somewhat checkered fortune, have contributed to make me partially acquainted with various kinds of work, I fear there are only a few, and these the least available, which I could "superintend." With the blasting of rock, stone-breaking, hedging, ditching, the forming of roads, wood-cutting and pruning, sawyers-work, and gardening I have been familiar since boyhood. At some of these occupations, I have occasionally directed the operations of twenty men—without, however, receiving a farthing more for my trouble, than the least responsible labourer of the gang—and I do not think I should find much difficulty in superintending any to a considerable extent ; but they could be of no service in the case under consideration. When I was a boy, with the odd halfpence which children usually spend at fairs and in toy shops, I bought wright's tools, with which I made chairs and tables ; and of these, that upon which I now sit, and at which I now write, are specimens. To oblige, and at the same time save the money of some poor neighbours, I was also in the habit of working during my leisure hours, as a cooper ; and there is not at present, a single wooden vessel in the house, which I have not at some time or other repaired. From having devoted a portion of my spare time to mending shoes, I had once some little fame as a cobbler ;

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I never indeed attempted to make new on
with a little attention, I could have repair
old almost as well as most shoemakers. A
came to be engaged in the quarries, when the s
chanced to be from home, I sometimes endeavo
to supply his place by sharpening the quarry t
myself; and at this branch of the business I
acquired a tolerable proficiency. By far the grea
part of both the mason and wright work of t
house in which I now live was performed by mys
and my poor brother. We succeeded, howeve
more by patient and unwearied perseverance, th
by that despatch and which should characterize a go
tradesman; and it would be utter folly in me to
claim to anything like a perfect knowledge of any
these businesses. From the foregoing it will
seen that my occupations have been as varied a
as numerous as those of most other men. In so
as regards the subject under consideration, most
them could be of no use; but I once had great c
fidence in my own ability to learn anything, a
though it is highly probable that passing time
have impaired the quickness of the capacity, i
emergency I still think I could learn a little. I
it should be supposed that I might have mad
fortune, I must here be permitted to say, that
little skill I possessed in these crafts, was, in
instances, exerted for the benefit of others,
very rarely brought any advantage to myself
yond the pleasure of having surmounted difficu
which others would not attempt to overcome.

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Of music, when supplied by others, I was always fond; but I could never either sing, or play on any instrument myself. Perhaps my ignorance of these accomplishments may be partly attributable to the circumstance of having had so much what some one has called, "sterner work to do." was wont, moreover, to consider music as a mere musement, and, when carried to excess by those ho had to earn their bread with the sweat of their row, as a sort of dissipation of time; and, as I lways wished to be engaged in something useful, I never thought of following after it. To drawing I can advance no claim. I beg to enclose for your inspection the only trial I ever made in my life. As you may see by comparing it with the frontispiece to my brother's Poems, it is an attempt to take a sketch of that group of old houses in one of which my best and happiest years were spent. I had no teacher or assistant. I soon found that I wanted that accuracy and delicacy of touch which would have been necessary to finish a picture upon which a lithographer could proceed, and after working upon it for half an hour, I gave it up in despair. I should say, however, that I have drawn plans of fields, plantations, and roads, upon a given scale, with no other instruments for taking angles &c. than such as I had constructed myself. My life throughout has been a busy one; and, with respect to getting forward in the world, the result holds out but small inducement to others to follow my

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example. Yet it was not in my nature to be
With me, to be employed upon some new
taking, and to find that I could succeed in
frequently to be as happy as mortals need
pect to be in the midst of what has emphatica
been called "A Vale of Tears!" and perhaps
had got less to do, I should only have had more
to muse on those melancholy subjects of which
have been in my way.

'MOUTPLEASANT, Jan. 6, 18

* * * * 'The works

we were able to purchase were neither very n
ous nor very important, at least during the
part of our career. Some time afterwards
beg to give you a list of them. The mass o
ing, however, which passed through our har
by no means inconsiderable. After it
known that we were readers, the whole of
quaintances, far and near, and even som
whom we could hardly number as such,
eager to lend us books. It was soon discov
we could despatch a pretty large volume
few evenings, and that we never suffered
sustain the slightest injury while in our
and thus people lent us books which they
selves borrowed, without the slightest
So punctual were we in these matters
willing either to break faith, or return
read, that on one occasion I recolle

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ne through the whole of one of Sir Walter
vels, a work, so far as I can remember, of
of 400 closely printed pages, between
and four o'clock next morning. The
one of the first uniform issues, with the
notes. Though we used to read alternately,
the labour between us, upon this occasion,
brother having caught cold, nearly the
evolved upon me; and well do I recollect
ge feeling of exhaustion which crept over
re I had reached the end. In addition to
ks with which we were thus favoured, for a
years, commencing with its very first ap-
e, we got regularly "Chambers' Edinburgh
," and this of itself served to keep up a de-
activity and a constant succession of new
our minds. Indeed I have often thought
hat it was well we were readers then; for
rds our time for such pursuits became very
scribed, and we were glad to devote almost
minute which could be spared from works of
ity to writing, in the hope—a vain one so far
were concerned—that we might thereby be
o better our fortune.

* * * * *

affords me very sincere pleasure to see the
st of "Houses of Refuge" so warmly taken up,
in the Report, and in John Wigham's tract.
institutions, when once fairly established, with
nical management should support themselves

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—a very important feature in a
and I have not the slightest doub
be the means of confirming good a
in the bosoms of thousands who c
evitably fall back to their form
and ultimately become the st
legislation. If the thing were
know it is not, I would strong
cessity of the whole of our yo
women belonging to the humb
undergoing a regular course
school of industry similar to
fuge, before they were allowe
is truly distressing to look r
verty and wretchedness whic
into the very vitals of socie
distressing to think that th
wretchedness has been in a
on by the idleness and ea
very individuals who are s
confident that the general
and economical habits, add
of foresight, would, in the
ation, go so far to banish
palling scenes of misery
rowing the heart and t
hitherto, with the except
attempt made by my brot
which fell still-born fro
Fort has been made to be

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Dr. Chalmers has spoken of making the poor support the poor, according to some plan which he adopted in a parish about Glasgow, and Dr. Alison (if I have not mistaken the meaning of a paragraph which I saw in a stray newspaper) has advocated the necessity of the rich supporting the poor; but no one has endeavoured to prove to the poor that, with proper management, it might be possible for them individually to support themselves, and that it is alike a duty and an honour for them to do so. Yet, unless this can be done, as society now stands in this country, I think it almost admits of being proved that we must go on from bad to worse, till we arrive at a state of things resembling that which prevails in Ireland. As an auxiliary and nurse to the great principle of self-dependence, I know of no means likely to be more successful than Savings Societies, as sketched in "Practical Economy." If a man can only be persuaded to save one pound, by a sort of instinct he almost always wishes to add another to it; and, having once been accustomed to consider himself somebody, he has ever after an aversion to the idea of sinking into nobody. Such hard-earned savings, moreover, are always estimated more highly and guarded with infinitely greater care than an unearned fortune. Hence it were but fair to infer that if young men generally could be got to make a beginning, they would be inclined to pause and consider before they ventured to incur the responsibilities, which, if incurred without a

proper provision, must necessarily plunge them in the gulf of poverty and misery. We all see the wretchedness that prevails, we are all in the habit of lamenting over it, and we often talk of financial and commercial embarrassments as the causes from which it proceeds; but when we have done these things, and perhaps endeavoured to lend some temporary relief, we think we have done enough,—no one thinks of probing the sore to the bottom. Yet if this were done, it would at once be seen that the youthful improvidence of our manufacturing population, their early marriages, and the rapid increase of their numbers which is thus occasioned, are the plague-spots of modern society—the worm which is preying on the root of every comfort; and till these evils are so far remedied, no palliation will ever do much in diminishing the amount of national suffering. Could not Robert Chambers take up the subject?—he has done much already to enlighten the minds of his poor countrymen—and fairly institute a Savings Society under his own eye, as a model for others to proceed upon. Originating with him, and backed with the influence of the Journal, the scheme would certainly find favour and support, although it emanated from too obscure a quarter at first to attract any notice. With but half the influence which some people derive from their annual thousands, I have often fancied that, in some respects, I could mould society to my will; but with only the influence of a poor individual

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earning his daily bread with the sweat of his brow, I have all along felt that I was a nonentity, and could do nothing.

'When I began to write, I had not the slightest intention of touching on this subject, but having been led into it, and having thus got upon one of my hobbies, it seems I could not easily get off again.

'I was much pleased with an article in the "Australian Record," entitled, "Self-Taxation and Emigration." The philanthropist may rest assured, that he cannot minister more effectually to the comfort of his poorer brethren, than by affording every facility for freeing the country from the surplus population which is at the root of Irish misery, and which is every year making both English and Scottish misery more distressing. But upon this subject I must not enter. * * *

I have long been of opinion, that the first essential to reforming any one, from the petty wrong-doer to the abandoned blackguard, is to secure his affections; and this, in general, is easily done, though few people ever think of making the attempt. Assist a boy with his top, or his kite, or enable him to get through with some favourite scheme, and he will do almost anything you please for you in return. In these matters, full-grown men are often mere children; they have only to be convinced, by your conduct and general bearing toward them, that you do take an interest in their happiness and would willingly make them better

men if it were in your power—ta
ever, to show, at the sametime, tha
be duped by any artifice to which
recourse—and then there is, at leas
they will listen attentively to wha
have to say; and, should your cha
as to command the respect of other
a strong probability, that they will
follow your example. I am again a
this is the only excuse I can plead
of the present letter—the writing of
my only amusement, and, indeed, al
been able to do, for the last two da
plaint, however, is nothing more th
cold. From having been, for some we
to my mother's death, constantly in a
was kept warm for her sake, the w
seem now to pass through me as i
withered leaf; and I feel that it will r
care to harden me, before I can face the
was wont to do.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *January* 18

'Dear Madam,—

* * * * * * *

'My warmest thanks are due to the pa
introduced the penny postage, which has
means—I had almost said—of saving me
f the hundreds of letters which I have
thin the last twelve months had cost, as w

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from 7½d., to 1s. each, I know not where or what I should have been ere now. I am getting better, and endeavouring to take the best care of myself I can. In a short time I expect to be able to acknowledge at greater length your kindness. In the meantime, I remain, Dear Madam, Your much indebted, very humble servant, A. B.'

'Do pardon me for returning the stamps, which, I trust, will not be required. This is unnecessary, you will say; but it is only following out a principle which you have taught me to respect more than ever.

A. B.'

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *January* 31*st*, 1840.

* * * * * * * *

'While the thing is in my head, I must not forget to tell you that I received a letter the other day from my unknown friends, enclosing £15*—requesting me to acknowledge receipt of the money "in a sealed note," which the Messrs. Black would address—

* This sum, as well as that mentioned below, was contributed by Mr. H. F. Chorley, author of "Music and Manners," and a few friends, and transmitted anonymously, through Messrs. A. & C. Black. Mr. Bethune used every effort to find a clue to the donors, in order to return the money, but without success. In these circumstances he lodged it in the Bank, and so far as I have been able to ascertain, continued to decline applying any of it to his own use. Whether any of it was applied to the erection of the monument to his brother, as some thought of doing so is indicated in the present letter below, I have not been able to ascertain.

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and stating that if there was anything else
these friends could assist me, to correspo
them through the same medium, &c. I
ately occured to me that this was a way o
these friends which I had not before th
and I accordingly acknowledged the mon
turned it at the same time—thanking r
tors in the best way I could—assuring t
was not in want—that, upon principle, I
it the duty of every man to provide
necessity as far as his ability would g
ging to be made acquainted with the
gentleman who had interested himsel
my behalf, &c. &c. The first £10 i
Commercial Bank as a deposit in m
intend to send that also as soon as I
to my last communication. No ment
of the money having been sent for t
erecting a stone to my brother's memo
however, I have now made arrang
tradesman. It is only a plain st
larger than the common size, with t
deceased, the date of his death, and
top; and below this, the last verse o
own "Hymns of the Churchyard."
side, or back of the stone, will be th
ed by an only brother to the mem
inhabitant below.'" I have now
to enclose the three graves wit
eeding two feet in height—a liber

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I cannot obtain till a meeting of the heritors takes place, and which may perhaps be denied even then;* but if it is granted I intend to place another small stone on the eastern side of the square, with the words, "The graves of a household," engraved upon it. These are my plans, and the accomplishment of them, I am told, will cost between 10 and 11 pounds —a sum which I am glad to find I can still afford.

'Though not habitually a very great egotist, I would beg your permission to say a few words concerning myself. Since a little after my mother's death, I have been the sole inhabitant of a house which, by the road, is at a distance of more than a hundred yards from any other; and there I cook and eat my solitary dinner, and days pass in which I never see "the human face divine," or once try my voice at speech. To some this would be the consummation of misery, but to me it is nothing. Indeed, the day always appears to be too short. I am now so far recovered, that I have only a slight cough, and I should have been willing to go to Glasgow immediately, had it not been for the following reasons:—As far back as 1826, while engaged in harvest work, I slept in what was called a stable-loft. From the breath of the horses, which had free access to ascend, the place was frequently like an oven; but then, if a gale chanced to spring up—from the vicinity of a large hole in the wall, through

* It was denied.

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which the fodder was introduced, a
door or other provision for closing
common thing to have the bed-cl
the wind. In other respects I lik
enough, because it freed me fro
rabble with whom I was connecte
changes of temperature were o
night, very great, and, as a conseq
almost have been expected, I can
For months afterwards it was
till at last it seemed to bid fair
consumption.* With the consta
open air, however, which my wo
constitution otherwise unimpair
and more recently I have recover
of accidents which, in the estima
dered my case alike hopeless a
since then I have always been m
cold, particularly from travellin
bed in severe weather. To avoid
circumstance, I have sometime
forty and fifty miles in the dep

* I have no other information regar
the above statement affords; but Mr. B
ever he was, was culpable to a degree
sending any human being to sleep in su
above horses is a very unwholesome situ
well protected the place may be from t
a place, with a large open hole or do
have believed such barbarity to have e

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:h home the same day on which I had

* * "I am glad that you sent Abstract of Dr. Alison's pamphlet." I read the whole of it with deep interest; t say that the facts which he has brought facts with which I was before wholly un- l—have tended considerably to modify rith regard to Poor-Laws. The prevailing arly increasing amount of national misery does call for prompt measures to check ss. Education, in time, might obviate a ie evil; but then it would be inhuman to and see thousands on thousands perishing y lowest abyss of wretchedness and crime, s slow remedy is in the course of applica- iout making an immediate effort to rescue n their fate; and for such an effort—made ale sufficiently extensive—voluntary cha- not supply the means. I am now convinced ay thing deserving the name of relief is to pted, assessment is the only alternative; would equalize the burden, making it bear on the unfeeling and the benevolent, it be the best course which could be adopted. s easy to see that the measure will be op- at least two-thirds, if not three-fourths, of le landed interest in Scotland; and unless glish members carry it through in defiance cotch, it must be lost to the country. Work-

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Houses, of which I had not before thought, an excellent principle. In them it is easy cognize a sufficient check upon imposture, the same time the means of effectually real destitution. But perhaps the best the whole is, that they *do not tend* to *break down the independence of their inmates as it is of any importance to the community that feeling preserved.* If I understand properly, every "able-bodied" man and is admitted into these institutions is set one shape or other; and so long as an constantly employed, he has reason to he is providing for his own wants, the cumstance being the overseer's furnishing work. Thus the feeling of independence operate in the natural way as long as fit for labour; and when this ceases to be society can suffer nothing from its being with. The only danger seems to be, that the pect of a legal provision against old age, might make individuals less careful to provide for season themselves; but practically it would pear that the confinement and strict discipline of a Work-House in a great measure counterbalance the evil to be expected from this quarter. It may also be fairly admitted that very few ever think of making a provision for old age in the time of youth, which, with most, is the only time at which it could be done; so that, view the matter as you will, very

an be lost. I myself have known more than
mily who have been brought to the very
f starvation by a fictitious want of employ-
which, so far as I could judge of the matter,
premeditated plan among their superiors;
thing could move these superiors to stir hand
; in their behalf; nor was it till after an in-
of three months that the men, three in num-
ıcceeded in procuring employment. The thing
:ed in the winter of 1832–3, when a spirit
sension seemed to exist between some of the
conservatives in this neighbourhood and the
trious classes, in consequence of the passing
e Reform Bill. From having endeavoured to
est myself in the cause of these poor men, I
I still detail the whole story to the minutest
mstance; but into these details it would serve
) purpose to enter. Suffice it to say, that I did
ider it barbarous, to a degree, in these gentle-
thus to wreak their party spleen upon a few
fending day labourers, who had never in their
s attended a single political meeting, and who
d not possibly, in any way, either forward or
ard the measure which then kept the county by
ears. The scene was truly distressing to those
) had an opportunity of hearing the complaints
l desponding thoughts of the suffering indi-
luals, as I did; but with Work-Houses and a
)perly administered Poor-Law, such a scene could
t have occurred. What Dr. Alison mentions

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about the simultaneous ejectment of the po
from whole estates——a thing which, when
sable, should always be done gradually—
revolting to humanity. This circumstan
would make it appear that checks upon
are, in some instances, as necessary as check
the poor; and therefore, I would say, let u
Work-Houses if we can get them. For my
can only bid Dr. Alison, Mr. Hill, and every
gentleman who is engaged in the cause of humi
God speed.

'With all this, I would spare no effort to
poor rates within as narrow limits as possible
whenever a large amount of charity is require
may at once be inferred that something is wrong,
that society is in an unhealthy state. It should a
be remembered, that there are serious evils insep
able from a large amount of charity, in whatev
form it may be bestowed; and not the least of the
is the circumstance of every half-penny which is give
in charity, being abstracted from the fund which
otherwise would have gone to employ independen
labourers. It may indeed be said, that the rich can
well spare a few luxuries for the support of the in-
digent poor; but then, there is scarcely a single ar-
ticle which either rich or poor can purchase, upon
which labour has not been bestowed, and the purchase
of which does not tend directly to create a demand
for more labour. Take foreign wines for an ex-
ample:——At first sight it would appear that the con-

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ption of these could not in any way benefit the
ish labourer; but with a little investigation, it
ld perhaps be found that a large proportion of
se very wines had been brought home in exchange
articles of British manufacture. I do not say
at the drinking of wine is the best way in which a
an can spend his income, but, that this branch of
penditure is not wholly without its use. Of course
is argument cannot be applied to ardent spirits,
he drinking of which I think, almost admits of be-
ng proved to be positively injurious to the commu-
nity, in every sense of the word. Now, if the above
doctrine is correct, and if there be any truth in Po-
litical Economy, the rich cannot curtail even their
luxuries—unless they save the money for other pur-
poses—without diminishing, to a certain extent, the
demand for labour, and producing a consequent dimi-
nution in the wages of the labourer. Take what
most people would be inclined to consider the very
worst view of the matter, by supposing that all the
rich were to become misers, and hoard up their
money with the very greatest care; and still they
could not do even this without conferring a positive
benefit upon society. To derive any advantage from
spare money, people either must employ it them-
selves, or place it at interest, in both of which ways,
by an immutable law, it must find its way into the
pockets of the industrious classes; and, by creating
a demand for their labour, tend to improve their
condition. In short, it would appear that we really

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want more misers than we have; and upon re
it would appear that the Wise Governor of t
verse has regulated it upon a principle of l
lence, which makes even men's selfishness m
to the good of their fellow-creatures. From n
stupidity, I may have failed to state the mat
as to make you understand it, or, what is still
probable, you understood it a thousand times
than I do, before you had read one word of w
have written; and thus, like every one else w
heart is open to the calls of benevolence, w
you are willing to sacrifice so much good to ge
of a pressing amount of evil, you will see the
priety of keeping both principles in view, and
deavouring to lessen misery in both ways, nam
by a well administered Poor-Law, and by endeavo
ing to communicate to the poor a knowledge
those immutable laws which regulate their incon
and those principles upon which their prosperity a
the prosperity of nations must ever depend.

'Here, if I might venture to express an opinio
upon so momentous a question, I would say, that
might, perhaps, be advisable to make the rudiment
of Political Economy a subject of instruction i
every school and seminary of education, from the
highest to the lowest. Political Economy is a
most important science—imasmuch as it may be
denominated, without a figure—the science of the
prosperity of nations, and the comfort of their in-
habitants; and it might be taught with a great

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more for themselves than what the las
compels them to do. But if it were
them in a popular form, and upon the c
dence, that while charity may do good
is almost as great an evil to others of
class—that the root of bitterness lies amo
selves, and that they only have the abil
dicate it—that their employers, in truth
more power in regulating the amount
wages and comforts, than *they* have in
the luxuries of their employers—and,
that the social system can never be grea
ded unless they lend the whole force of t
individual efforts, scientifically and ste
rected to one great purpose,—it were at
sonable to suppose, that in time we migh
better state of society, and that, ultima
demands upon charity might be greatly

'This process of improvement must neces
slow; and to afford any hope of success, it
begun with the young; for it is easy to see
heads of the old are already filled with a se
tions which it would be very difficult either
or alter. This throws us once more back u
schools, where I think classes might advanta
be formed, for instructing the elder boys
principles of Political Economy; while at
examinations &c., it might even be advisa
award the highest prizes for the greatest a
of knowledge in this science. In our Scottish

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almost forgotten to say, that with a view to ascertain how far a Poor-Law operates upon Population, it might be of some importance to obtain accurate returns of the relative increase of Population in England and Scotland—the one country being without, and the other with, a Poor-Law; and for this purpose it might be desirable in making the next census, to have the natives of both ends of the island, distinguished from the Irish and other emigrants, Dr. Alison is perfectly right in concluding that misery forms no check to population, among what may be called the "dregs of society;" but then, every brief season of prosperity gives it a decided impulse among the whole of those classes situated immediately above the lowest. This fact, if I mistake not, would be satisfactorily established by a reference to the register of marriages for 1825, and 1836, the seasons when a sort of feverish commercial prosperity prevailed. This seems to sanction the opinion, that, unless the industrious classes can be taught to form a more correct estimate of the causes of misery, by a rapid increase of themselves they will always neutralize any effort which can be made greatly or permanently to improve their condition. With double the extent of territory which we possess, double our commerce, and double our manufactures, we might all have the means of living comfortably; * but in 30 years we would, in

* This is an exaggerated supposition, and not in harmony with our author's economical principles. We require no such extra-

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all likelihood, double our population also, and then we should be exactly where we were.

'In conclusion, I must now beg your pardon for what I have written. I cannot very well excuse myself for having thus dragged a lady over such a length of dry and dusty road. But I know that you are an enthusiast in the cause of humanity; and as I have no other means of making myself heard, you may perhaps be induced to pardon my impotent attempts to help forward a most important movement. I have no room to say how glad I was to hear of the new system of training adopted in some of the English schools. Could we have nothing of the kind here?—With warmest thanks to you and Mr. Hill, I remain, Dear Madam, Your much indebted, very humble servant, A. B.'

ordinary extension of territory and commerce as this, in order to all being furnished with the means of living comfortably. Our present resources are, in spite of injurious commercial restrictions, adequate to this, were they economically applied. But while there is so much luxury and frivolous dissipation among the rich, and so much improvidence and recklessness among the poor, national distress cannot justly be referred to over population as its direct principal cause. Distress could be charged to that cause only if it continued to prevail after our resources were generally frugally applied. Our distress, as yet, arises not from any inevitable law of society, but from a too prevalent misapplication of our resources. But evil is often overruled in some way for good; and Providence seems to be making the pressure of distress here, the means of forcing off large numbers of our population to distant lands, carrying with them the blessings of religion and civilization, and giving them extended localization in every region of the globe.

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'MOUNTPLEASANT, February,

'Dear Madam,—I have now to thank
your very kind letter of the 18th inst., an
I am afraid that I am only destined to dis
your expectations, I must say, that I am no
ling to strain every nerve to comply with
friendly wishes. Perth is a place which,
others, I should like, both on account of its sc
and its proximity to the scenes among which
bred. By the steamboats, it is only about an h
sailing distant from Newburgh, and even the h
in which I now write may be seen from the hill
its immediate neighbourhood. In a fortnight
so, I may be able to leave this quarter, and the
would beg to have the honour of thanking you pe
sonally, as I pass Edinburgh on my way to Gla
gow. I need not trouble you with an account
the little matters which must detain me here til
the time mentioned above. I feel that it is better
to be endeavouring to obviate difficulties as fast as
possible, than to sit still and either write about or
think over them. The moment I have got things
in readiness I will apprise you of it; and in the
meantime, I remain, Dear Madam, Your much in-
debted, very humble servant,

A. B.'

According to the intention indicated in some of the preceding Letters, Mr. Bethune went to Glasgow early in March. He had not high or sanguine anticipations we may suppose; but he felt bitterly

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the degradation of being, on his arrival there, put into the place of a common turnkey. In such a situation, he felt that he could not, in any circumstances, have long remained; but his departure was hastened by a severe cold, which he caught a few days after his arrival in Glasgow. As soon as he was able to move, he hastened away from a position so repugnant to the entire current of his feelings. He walked the greater part of the way home, and, on arriving there, found himself so much a sufferer from this ill-advised adventure, that he had to keep within doors for some time afterwards. The following extract which has been furnished me, is from a Letter to Mrs. Hill, written shortly after his return home to Mountpleasant. I give it with a note appended to it by Mrs. Hill prefixed :—

['Mr. Bethune went to Glasgow, and had scarcely time to become accustomed to the duties of a warder in the North Prison, when he caught a severe cold, and was quite incapacitated for any labour. Mr. Brebner, the benevolent Governor of the Prison, was anxious to show him every kind of humane attention, and, indeed, had a room prepared for him in the Prison, but Mr. Bethune was too ill to be any where but in his own home; and this conviction made him take the immediate step of returning to Newburgh, after only a week's trial. From all that Mr. Brebner saw of Mr. Bethune, he believed he would make a good officer, and he most kindly offered to receive him again

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as a warder, if he were inclined to return
Bethune's health continued far too impair
a step to be taken, even if his mind ha
made up against holding the office of
keeper of a prison.']

'MOUNTPLEASANT, March

* * * * 'Jailers and t
indispensable to the very existence of
state of society—nay, farther, we are t
ture, that "The land shall not be cl
blood, but by the blood of him wh
which proves that hangmen are indisp
yet there are thousands on thousand
viduals who would rather have the rop
their own necks than put it about th
fellow-creature, whatever might be his
I am only one of these. I would al
be hanged myself, as be either a hang
keeper of the commodity upon which I
cise his craft. As I once hinted before,
restored,) I still think I might be of s
teacher or librarian—or rather, I sho
one or other of these. In such a sph
knowledge of human nature I have a
up, might perhaps be turned to some
But unless I could obtain some si
would afford something like leisure
with the prisoners, and trying to asce
been their thoughts, springs of acti

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of crim e,' together with opportunities of offering such advice as the case seemed to call for, I would at once and for ever relinquish the idea of having anything to do with prisons. While I would beg your pardon for the freedom with which I have spoken, I would also beg to say that to me it has always appeared best to speak definitively upon such subjects. Let me once more request you not to trouble yourself with writing till you hear from me again; and in the meantime, believe me as before &c. &c.,

A. B.'

A good while afterwards, we find him thus writing his literary friend in reference to this affair:—

MOUNTPLEASANT *March* 21, 1842.

'Dear Sir,—My coming to Glasgow was not, as you seem to suppose, occasioned either by destitution, or "some new misfortune." The cause of it was simply this:—A copy of my brother's Life and Poems had, it seemed, fallen into the hands of Mrs. Hill, the lady of Frederick Hill, Esq., Inspector of prisons; and she wished to procure for me what she conceived would be a comfortable situation, as a teacher, or something of that sort, in one or other of these dens for evil-doers. In this I must give her full credit for being actuated by a sincere wish to serve me. The Glasgow Bridewell was considered as the pattern of such institutions; and thither I was requested to go that I might be there initiated

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into the mystery of managing wild beasts of
man species. Without being very sangui
expectations, I was not displeased at the
of a situation where my earnings would be
and I accordingly went. But on getting
came to learn that, if I would consent to
a turnkey for a year or two, or till such
had made myself thoroughly master of
of a prison discipline, I might have a
ing promoted to the situation of a jail
country town, with a salary of forty or
a year. For such promotion, I had no
and besides, I could not help disliking
of the other turnkeys, some of whom,
on them, I soon came to regard as the
ing the very great praise which had been
puppyism and self-conceit. Sometimes,
I was not a little amused by discovering
sublime ideas which these "rare specimens of
manity" had formed of their own knowledge
importance, as compared with the ignorance
utter insignificance of my own very unimporta
self. In the midst of duties which were not ve
pleasing, I had, nevertheless, determined to rema
for a month or two, to please my patroness, an
then beg to be allowed to retire from a situatio
for which I did not consider myself qualified. But,
on the eighth or ninth day after my arrival in Glas-
gow, I caught a very bad cold, which laid me aside
from these duties altogether. For some time pre-

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vious to my mother's death, and throughout the winter, my health had been in a very tottering condition; I could not help thinking that this cold might do for me, what the cold which he had caught on the 28th of January, two years before, had done for my brother; and, after having been confined to my lodgings for one day—during which my only resource was an almost total abstinence from victuals,—toward noon on the second day, I felt somewhat relieved—wrote a note to the "governor of the prisons," giving up the situation, and got into one of the canal boats, with which I proceeded as far as it went on the way to Stirling. The rest of the journey I was able to perform on foot; and when I had again reached my own solitary habitation, this "wild-goose chase" was at an end. Altogether the thing was an unfortunate speculation, in as much as it occasioned me a good deal of expense, and an illness from the effects of which, together with the journey which followed, I did not recover for three or four months. A. B.'

His friend's opinion of the situation is expressed in the following extract:—

'*April* 26, 1842.

'My Dear Sir,—The account you have given of your trip to Glasgow certainly adds another hue to the already chequered page of your history. Of

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all conceivable occupations, the
took was certainly the least ad
and character. "Misery mak
with strange bed-fellows," qu
rejoice in the good fortune w
you to keep such company lon
it agreeable. I have been th
here; and certainly there doe
much to choose, in the way of
between the jailer and his c
difference is, in my opinion, in
His term of durance vile is lim
kept from absolute despondenc
timate liberation. The turn
however, is perpetual; and alth
it is scarcely less rigorous tha
Besides, the very nature of the
every feeling of humanity; a
as great rogues as their pris
however, which induced the
situation in your power, is ex
to her; and this circumstance,
with those voluntary offers of
lication of your work has ex
gratifying to your feelings, alt
avail yourself of them. They
of the popularity of the wor
people whose good opinion is
ing; and I am glad to think t
duced to continue your litera

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in a way which cannot subject you to any pecuniary risk.'

To those friends who understood his character best, his escape from such a situation was matter of sincere congratulation. Another thus writes:—'While I am unfeignedly sorry for the suffering you have undergone, I cannot help feeling glad that you have abandoned the situation of a turnkey. Verily, had I guessed a hundred years, I should never have guessed that as an office likely to be yours; and had I been told by any person but yourself that you had made trial of it, I would not have believed them. Not that I consider any dishonour attached to such an office; but, knowing something of your habits and disposition, I would consider you the most unlikely person in the world to fill a situation of the kind with either pleasure or satisfaction to yourself.'

In these views of the case we entirely concur; and while we accord to the lady who interested herself on his behalf, full credit for benevolent intentions, and for the deep concern she evinced for Mr. Bethune after, as well as before, his visit to Glasgow, we yet feel called on to add a few remarks of our own. The case, then, on which the preceding extracts bear, furnishes us with an illustration of the estimate put on literature, apart from wealth and other extrinsic distinctions. Even though allied with high virtue, and the truest refinement of character, if it present itself under a

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Galasheils coat, and with the horny hands of la
bour, what is it worth? Only the lowest function
about the most degraded of mankind—a function
which any one possessing delicacy of feeling would
wish that the spirit of mechanical invention might
altogether supersede. Would a situation of this
sort ever have been thought of for the merest clod-
pole trained under exemption from manual labour?
But it seems it was the indispensable initiatory in
the training of a prison officer. Indispensable
order to what? Mr. Bethune would have been
willing to have become a teacher or librarian:
what relation had turning bolts, and keeping guard
on cells to either of these? Would he have been
fitter for the one or the other, after a year or
two's training at such an occupation? If he was
not to receive a situation in some degree congenial
to his feelings, and in some measure worthy of his
genius and attainments—far better have allowed
him to remain where he was—enjoying the freedom
of his hard-earned independence.* It is not in its

* We cannot altogether acquit Mr. Bethune himself of blame in the affair. In one of his earlier letters to Mrs. Hill, he had thus written:—'Once more, let me beg you to think of me as one in no way superior to the common race of day-labourers who are to be met with upon our public roads. The appearance of many of these would indicate far higher attainments than mine; and, had they chosen to exert themselves, it is highly probable that they would have outdone me in the few things I have attempted. I should be most willing to submit all to the judgment of Mr. Brebner; only I would have him to regard me

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individual aspects and relations on either side, however, that we attach the greatest importance to this transaction, but as an exponent of the sentiments which pervade cultivated society generally in regard to such men as Mr. Bethune. Were they not estimated much more by the rank in life in which Providence has ordered that they should have their birth and training, than by their mental qualities and attainments, would a case like that which has called forth these remarks ever have occurred? There were persons who, in the most praiseworthy spirit, would have assisted Mr. Bethune, but he uniformly declined gratuitous pecuniary assistance; and seeing this was the case, it may be asked, what then could be done for him? We are prepared not only to justify Mr. Bethune in doing this, but to accord him high admiration. The spirit actuating those who offered such assistance, as contrasted with the apathy pervading the public generally, merits high praise; but until literary men, situated as Mr. Bethune was, come to be regarded in quite another light than as objects of charity, we shall rejoice to see them acting as he did—so long as their own exertions can at

with suspicious scrutiny before he decided upon my fitness for even the humblest situation.' We should never profess a measure of humility which we are not conscious that we really feel; nor express an estimate of our powers and relative importance which we would not like others to entertain and act on in regard to us.

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all procure for them the means of supporting existence. When services have, to say the least, a very equivocal relation to the good of mankind, receive the highest honours and rewards of the State; while they, if not treated with utter neglect, are offered only the very meanest situations in the public service—it is refreshing to meet with such instances among them of lofty and stern independence.

At this hour, while we write, thousands are assembled to enjoy themselves, (if the elements would permit them,*) under the name of commemorating the genius of Burns; while he, when living, after having been lionized for a winter or so, was discarded, and allowed to seek a scanty subsistence for himself and family in a situation which drew from him the bitter doggerel:—

"Searching auld wives' barrels,
Ochon the day
That clarty barm should stain my laurels!
But what'll ye say?—
These muving things, ca'd wives and weans,
Would muve the vera hearts o' stanes."

Ah! but had he lived now, how differently would he have been treated! Good, living public, you would fain cheaply enjoy this credit. Writing pa-

* On the 6th of August last, the day of the Burns Festival, it poured out torrents of rain.

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negyri cs, getting up fetes and festivals, if nothing more was necessary to establish your reputation for sympathy with genius how it would shine! But unfortunately there are other tests. What have you done for men (we compare them not with Burns as to genius, but of no mean capabilities and of the highest virtue,) who lived, toiled, struggled, sunk amid the very echoes of your plaudits over the genius of Scotland's great poet? You reproach the public, and the dispensers of patronage who preceded you—that, when Burns made his appeal to them, they heeded not, but allowed him to drag out his brief life in the ungenial and degrading capacity of an exciseman. Well: Alexander Bethune—a far worthier, if not such a highly gifted man—made his appeal to you, and there was proffered him the situation of a turnkey! But here he had the advantage of the great peasant-bard. By reason of his high virtue and self-command he was in a condition that did not impose on him any necessity of accepting a situation repugnant to his feelings.

The following letter to Mrs. Hill, while it discloses more fully Mr. Bethune's views and feelings, shows the critical state of his health after his return from Glasgow, and imbodies some very remarkable premonitions of his approaching end:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *March* 31, 1841.

'Dear Madam,—When you heard of my leaving

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Glasgow, you would probably think that I very childishly in quitting a situation which cost so much trouble to procure, for what would deem nothing more than a passing col when you know that it a large blister has been to my breast, that it is still raw, and that done nothing since, you will perhaps thi hardly of me. What I considered the wor toms of the case are now gone, and I am a good deal better; still, my own convi that the machine is nearly worn out, and would be vanity to make any great exer procure new employments for one for whom at no very distant day perhaps, will pro manent situation. Indeed, I did not know was so much enfeebled, till I had made an to be stronger, and felt that I was so weak having been nearly deprived of sleep the part of half a year, previous to my mother's death and being mostly confined to the house throughout the winter, I am now convinced that the mere cir cumstance of having every faculty of both mind and body tied down to a round of duties with which I was unacquainted, for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, (as was the case in the bridewell,) had it been persisted in for any length of time, would have placed me above patronage. Though the dis- covery was perhaps an unwelcome one, I feel that "I am not what I have been," and there is no use in dreaming that I shall ever be so again, or in at-

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to remain four or five months in Glasgow,
beg to be allowed to retire from a station
turnkey I mean) for which nature had not
* * * 'As to
librarians have nothing to do with the li
cells in the morning or locking-up at
hours of attending are shorter than thos
key, while their duties incur less respo
at least, less risk of getting into erro
interval might thus be obtained ever
tending to what George Combe has v
ately called "The Laws of Health;"
I have long disregarded, because I
otherwise, but which it seems I ca
much longer and continue an inh
* * *
earth.

'I have no sinister motive in v
tion such a situation as one whi
When the additional expense of l
considered, I do not expect to be
the end of the year by going to J
be by staying at home; but in
versation, by pointing out pass
buckling them with representa
might perhaps be able to do
spirit of humanity, as far as i
the regulations of a place o
the other officers. As yet y
the very limited extent to wh
No farther gone than Satu

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to him than a commiserative and patroniz
gard :—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *May* 15, 1

'Dear Madam,— * * * * Havi
engagement of any moment, I will be in
early in the week—Monday or Tuesday, perh
and, as soon as I conveniently can, I will not
to apprize you of the result of my interview
Mr. D.——. From the tenor of your letter, I
most infer that you are not very sanguine in
expectations of my being successful; and I
say, that I do not anticipate much myself.
however, perfectly free from everything like anxi
on the subject—a consciousness of power to
vide for my own wants, in a number of other
sets my mind entirely at ease; and should
D—— start any serious objections, as to my lea
Glasgow so abruptly, or the like, I may perh
let him know, that it will depend as much on
accepting, as on *his* preferring, whether or no
shall ever darken the door of the Penitentiar
Perth with my shadow. The whole, however,
depend upon the elevation from which he
choose to look down upon his very humble ser
What pleased me particularly, during the
short time which I passed in your presen
the total absence of that galling condes
with which the rich in general treat the po
they may think proper to patronize

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The following extracts from Mr. Bethune's
swer to the communication just mentioned, in
some of his views in regard to prison disci
His impressions regarding the character of some
those in the situation of turnkey with whom
came in contact during his brief sojourn in
gow, the reader will perceive to have been
thing but favourable. But Mrs. Hill states
note, that two of those then in that situation,
only engaged on trial; and that they "were
missed for want of that kindness and benevo
of feeling so necessary in a good prison
The Report referred to, and commented
Mr. Hill's Report on Prison Discipline. The
of the following extracts rather outruns the
rative; but I give them in this connexion,
conclusion of Mr. Bethune's correspondence
Mrs. Hill in regard to Prison situations:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, by NEWBURGH,
FIFE, *Nov.* 22, 1842.

'Dear Madam,— * * * * To
the good opinion and the esteem of the
telligent part of the community, has
one of the objects of my ambition; and, the
would not wish to overtax their benevolence,
must say, that my appreciation of their re
not lessened by such efforts as you have
improve my worldly condition. To come
to the point—my sentiments relating to

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selves in a number of ways whicl
never seen such scenes would not
Hugh Miller, in his work on C
"the advantages of a wandering
I think, I could almost point ou
these, and which I would call,
of being born to a lot so humb
below the notice and considerat
at least, to this circumstance I
owe a sort of acquaintance wit
racters which I should have de
from the most classical educat
might venture to state my owr
say, that the out-and-out, ha
turnkey will, in general, be
very little true benevolence-
fected quality he may have,
—such a share of cautiousn
conceal his own faults and
large measure of self-esteen
sciousness—forced upon hi
by previous circumstances
ments, and the range of l
are not such as to command
fellow-creatures in ordin
natural consequence of
nexion with the above-
must be a wish for opi
mission and respect fron
that they must, of neces

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and then, should he continue refractory, let address him in some such manner as the follow "John," or "James,"—as the case may be—" sorry for you—sorry to think that you cannot late your conduct so as to avoid punishment you already know the discipline of the Pris cannot shield you from it; and, if I could, it not be my duty to do so." Let him then br fair and impartial statement of the whole the Governor; meeting everything the pri may have to say in his own defence in a cand straightforward manner, and there will scar such a thing as complaints from prisoners.

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CHAPTER VIII.

PUBLICATION OF THE SECOND EDITION OF THE 'LIFE AND POEMS OF JOHN BETHUNE'—INTEREST EXCITED IN REGARD TO MR. BETHUNE IN TWO LADIES, MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS—CORRESPONDENCE WITH THESE—MR. BETHUNE'S KINDNESS TO A FRIEND IN ILL HEALTH—LETTERS—MARKS OF INTEREST IN MR. BETHUNE ON THE PART OF DR. ANDREW COMBE AND MR. GEORGE COMBE.

In the early part of 1841, a second edition of 'The Life and Poems of John Bethune' was published by John Wright & Co. Bristol.* It was at first intended to extend the work to two volumes, but from this the publishers were dissuaded by James Montgomery, to whom they applied for an introductory essay. Mr. Montgomery, however, declined attempting this in a letter, the greater part of which has been prefixed to the second edition, and which imbodies a very just estimate of the character of the Bethunes. The publication of the work in England, brought it under the notice of not a

* This edition is inscribed to Mr. Dalgleish, who had taken such an interest in, and done so much to promote the success of, the first.

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few, in whose minds its perusal excited much sympathy and admiration. Among these were two cellent ladies belonging to the Society of Friends one of which proved a most indefatigable and successful agent in promoting the sale of our works; which she soon found the only method which he would allow her to confer a pecuniary benefit on him—a way in which, it may be remarked it was open to many to have promoted his interest at once sucessfully, and most gratefully to his feelings. This lady opened her correspondence with him, by a proffer of the sum of three pounds, or which she begged his acceptance, as a "token of grateful remembrance of the pleasure afforded her by the perusal of 'The Life and Poems of John Bethune.'" The following is Mr. Bethune's answer, declining of course the acceptance of the money:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *near* NEWBURGH, FIFESHIRE, *December* 16, 1841.

'Dear Madam,—I have this evening received a Post-Office order for three pounds, from you, and, in acknowledging it, I know not well how to express my feelings. To me it is gratifying in the highest degree to know that my humble endeavours to preserve a memorial of the name and the virtues of a very dear friend, now gone to his eternal rest, have been appreciated by one at so great a distance—gratifying, too, to believe that his simple story had interested you so much as to make you think of ex-

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r generosity in the manner you have only remaining friend. But, alas! to like me, have survived their kindred, y cannot recall the past, nor can it fill hich death has made. With no living re for, or to care for me, I should be but d were I to draw upon that benevolence s been so liberally and so generously ex- owards me. I had once an ambition to rise overty; and solitary as I am, I should still provide something for sickness, (old age I ot expect to see,) but even this must not be t the expense of others; and though I should or, as there is a strong probability that I will, still be a consolation to think that if I have any way benefited the world, neither have I ng my brief space, been a burden to it. For e reasons, dear madam, and with a gratitude y as warm as if I had remained your debtor for full amount, I now humbly beg to return a Post- ice order for the sum, three pounds, as it was sent. have excited your sympathy, and—might I add to deserve your esteem is enough, and more than nough for me.

'I should now conclude, and yet I feel as if my motives might still be liable to misconstruction; but after having read my poor brother's story, I think you will not misconstrue them. It is not the pride of an increasing fortune which makes me averse to availing myself of the benevolence of others: for

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—apart from the profits of the first edit
brother's posthumous works, which await
ing of a monument to be placed over his g
about five pounds which I have drawn for
the second edition which I have sold for
lishers—I have at present, only thirty
which I can fairly call my own; and my
when the weather allows me to be abroad
ing till night, are only one shilling and
a day, with scarcely half work. But from
I have all along considered it the duty
man, to the very uttermost of that ability
God has given him, to endeavour to provide
own wants, and to be satisfied with that station
over humble, which Providence had assigned
provided he could not better it by his own
dustry. Should the all-wise Disposer of events
meet to spare that measure of health which
still permitted to enjoy for a little longer
I feel that my constitution is sadly shaken,
possible that I may yet be able to save some
The second edition of the book, too, as I should
certain that it is in honourable hands, whi
duce a little—that is to say if it sell, a matter
is still questionable. Whatever be the result, I
me beg you to lie under no apprehension for m
comfort. I have at present, every thing which
really want, and I have often fared harder be
fore than I do now. My work might fail, have been a
steady perhaps, as that of other men, had it not

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the last three or four months I have
myself free from any lengthened en-
the prospect of obtaining a sort of situ-
my rewards would be somewhat better
of a day-labourer, the settlement of
been delayed from time to time, and
w begin to suspect will produce nothing
As soon as this affair is finally concluded,
doubt of being again able to get into
nployment, and that, with health, I shall
st above want; and I must not expect to
world, which had been strewed with thorns
few friends, a path of roses for myself.
ring the evenings, and those intervals of
which I could command, I have lately copied
repared for the press, with some additions of
wn, a Memoir of my grandmother, which
written by my brother in 1836; and if I suc-
in getting it printed, as the work will be of a
which may be easily forwarded by post, I
uld be most happy to present you with a copy,
a small token of my gratitude for the notice which
u have been pleased to take of me, and of my
uch lamented brother's literary remains. In that
ase, I hope you will pardon my once more intrud-
ng myself upon you; and otherwise, I must ever
remain Your much indebted, very humble servant,

A. B.'

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of inserting

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his friend's rejoinder, which I doubt not will welcome to many readers, as indicative of the fined spirit, the sweet humility, the serenity of and active benevolence, which characterize of the members of the Society of Friends:—

'My Dear Friend,—Thy letter, covering the turned Post Office order, was received this evening and I am much obliged by thy candour, and truly admire the motives which induced thee to maintain that independence so commendable in those feel the will and the ability to maintain it; surely it may be carried too far. Thy dear brother appeared to be of my opinion, in his sweet poem, "The Wish;" but what can be the use of wealth, if it be refused by those we wish to serve. I did not see the letter to which thine is a reply. It was written at my request by a young person who is my companion. There was nothing in it, I hope, that could wound thy feelings. I should indeed be grieved if there was. Nothing could be farther from my intention; yet I fear it must seem to imply a want of delicacy in the offer, which, I am sure, was not considered as a gift, but simply to acknowledge the pleasure and instruction received from the perusing of the volume of John Bethune, and to claim some sympathy with the noble mind of his brother—a brother not by consanguinity only, but so in heart and in mind. I am, it is true, a stranger, and situated at a distance; and though of the mid-

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like thyself, have all my lifetime—and I advanced in years—been blessed with such petency as afforded me the very responsible of helping those on whom the ills of life had permitted to press more heavily, either from ess or other causes; and this as due from a aker in human suffering—a fellow-pilgrim and d. It is new to me to be refused; but this, I , must have been my own fault, and I am still lopes thou wilt point out some way in which I serve thee. Is there any other medium more eeable to thee than the Post Office? I have d a considerable part of the books I purchased, d am in want of more. Canst thou supply me th twenty or thirty copies of the Life of thy ex- llent brother, so as to ensure a better profit than iat from the booksellers? If not provided with he books, wilt thou please to order them from the ooksellers, to be sent to me; and receive the money hyself. But remember I will pay the full price for the books, which I consider very low.

'I was much interested by the account of thy venerable grandmother, in the printed volume, and am glad to hear that a Memoir of her is likely to be printed. I am a visitor to a society here for the relief of aged women; and such a publication might be highly useful to them. Surely thou couldst have no objection to my contributing towards the expense of printing it. Again I would repeat, that it would oblige me much if I could know in what way I could serve thee.'

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The zeal and succes
proved a real friend, pr
seller and book-distril
half, will appear from

'Mou

'My Dear Friend,—
with a letter from you
Post Office order for
tional twenty-five copie
"Life and Poems," £
Bristol to-day, by the s
nies a proof of the M.
sent here for correction
reach you in safety.
kindness, in this respect
which you have made,
not only to gratify my
mory of my brother, but
I may well be ashamed
and can do nothing to
time I might have said
were only making the
pretext for bestowing y
one who has, perhaps, t
called the "pride of po
but, at present, for the
many others, I can sca
gratified in the highest

T

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ent year, if Providence bless me with health, have the manuscript of a volume of my bro- Letters, Prose Essays, and other Papers" or the press;* and, if the present edition of ns could be disposed of, I have good hopes e firm of "Wright, Allis, and Bagnall," late ht and Albright" might be induced to add ld volume of prose works, in bringing out r edition. It is not but that the little ce- which my brother's name has already ac- might, perhaps, enable me to find another her; but I am most desirous that the whole writings which may be given to the public, issue from the same press and be published same house, which I think would ensure a circulation;—and thus my thanks are due in no ordinary degree for the very great r of copies which you have taken off the pub- hands. I must not press them in this mat- however, but wait patiently till I see how they ear themselves of the risk which they have y undertaken.

health—and for this I have reason to thank is now tolerably good. Two months of hard in the open air, has greatly improved my th and given me a power of resisting fatigue

s volume was not published during Mr. Bethune's life- The copyright was by him bequeathed to the 'Free Church,' ve as yet heard nothing as to its publication.

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which I did not expect eve
a wise arrangement of Prov
which the greater part of
subsist, has a tendency to
and in numerous instance
frame which ease and ina
destroy. While God shal
strength, I should never
there are times when I
drudgery to which I am
less severe; and if I am s
possible that even in this
With about £80 in mone
vantages which I possess,
house here, which would
added to the rents of part
inhabit would make my in
bour, nearly £15 annually
should feel myself as inde
landed proprietor in the
a member of the Church
was born and bred, you w
much of Quakerism there
ing. In dress, and almost
all along endeavoured to
ness which was consistent
a thing which has often en
through, where otherwise
been able to do so. I mu
ing of friendless desolati

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ere called away, had rendered me near-
o every thing, has now in a great mea-
away, and there are seasons at which I
upon my departed friends with a sort of
interest which has in it more of plea-
of pain. From this you will see that my
ces and prospects are not at all dis-
If the new work* sells well, and I can
the 300 copies, which, in that event I
I will be in possession of £15; and be-
piration of the year, if Providence should
ndeavours, I may, perhaps, be able to
sum £20 or £22 which will be at least
rt of the money required to make me
t.

you some idea of the contents of the
cond volume of my brother's posthumous
ugh years may elapse before it can be
it has just occurred to me that I may
a "Essay on Poetry." I have not yet
read it since I finished the copy, and
ore probable that it may contain some
I flatter myself that the spirit of some
will not be displeasing to you. If the
so much manuscript would not be fa-
ould be much gratified by your looking
d, as I have promised to send it to
uaintance in Aberdeenshire, I would

Annie Macdonald. The sale fully answered his

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beg you to return it in th
time I hope you will ha
'For all your kindn
your friends, to whom
number of interesting l
my thanks in return, pra
you with his richest b
respect, I am Your very

'MOUN

'My Dear Friend,—I
the receipt of your bo
for £2 10s, making alto
of your money, which I
self and others—£10
"Life and Poems," and
of which the bookselle
these sums and the wh
I must believe you, wh
"Bookseller." That y
book circulator I eve
Long may you be spare
labours for the good o
may you reap abunda
bours, both here and he
of one who owes muc
now begs to subscribe
friend and servant,

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tter was addressed by Mr. Be-
ady of the Society of Friends,*
commencement of this chapter,
rom her which she had been in-
the perusal of his brother's Life
ing much generous and appreciа-
l making many kind inquiries,
it finely alive to the beauty and
ter of the Bethunes could prompt.
ırs, my husband and myself,' she
velling in Scotland, on our wed-
l we visited the residence of Sir
hy very estimable brother was
); and had we then known him
do through the medium of his
h I should have preferred seeing
dwelling of the great Sir Walter!
gain in Scotland, how much more
el in seeing what was once the re-
her, and also in seeing his grave,
any thing at Abbotsford! I ad-
's character much more than Sir
nd in regard to many of the higher
d those features which will outlive
ot but it was more worthy of ad-

cellent ladies has allowed me the pleasure
ıe to the reader; but in regard to this
l to say, that she is the sister of a gentle-
public, and one of the most distinguished
Society of Friends.

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*miration?** The lady's hus
her in writing Mr. Bethun
dressing in the plural :—

'MOUNTP
FIFESHI

'Dear Friends,—Deepl
the circumstance of your
the 8th of last month hav
acknowledged, it is with u
I now take up a pen to
in this quarter is now whc
part of the crop secured
up my abode in that hu
been reared with so mucl
commodation of a little f
with the exception of th
in the dust. In a certa
"path" may be said to l
once was, inasmuch as I
to provide—no one for v
to be anxious—in short,
or who could care for n

* No reader will be so ob
any comparison of literary m
editor is insensible to the mar
evinced by Sir Walter Scott
spirit, and almost self-sacrifi
life, under a pecuniary calar
quite unnerved any ordinary

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ily supplied. This, however, is a state of things
ich I believe few would covet; and, had such
n the will of Providence, I should have certainly
ferred those little anxieties, with which my mind
s once occupied, to that solitude and exemption
n care with which I am now surrounded. Yet it
it not be supposed that I am melancholy or un-
py. Time has a strange influence in reconciling
ple to almost any circumstances, and it has now
ewhat worn off the depth and poignancy of those
ings with which I was wont to ponder over my
rted friends. I must also say, that I believe I
ld have no difficulty in finding friends in this
hbourhood who would be ready to assist me
money, if that were necessary, or whatever
which it had been our uniform endeavour to
anness to take it. The natural wants of a
individual may be at all times easily sup-
: I have scarcely any artificial ones; and it is
nly the duty of every one to provide for him-
onestly and independently, so long as Provi-
may spare him the ability to do so. As to
ther sort of friendship which consists in mu-
nfidence and reciprocity of feeling, I should
despair of finding it. Indeed, I can easily
ve that I may be, in this respect, myself to
; and that as I do not readily repose confi-
in others—perhaps from having found it

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oftener than once abused—others wil
confidence in me, except when placed
stances over which they suppose, whet
wrong, I may have some control: an
perhaps probable that "the world" an
obscurest of its denizens may part
upon "fair terms" and nothing mo
sometimes thought that because I do
heartily in the gossip and tattle of
people around me, they have come to
a creature altogether different fro
and therefore not to be trusted. Be
I would still wish to sympathize with
sufferings, and to promote their ha
extent of my little abilities; and for
little care. While speaking of gos
will be inclined to think that wh
written is a sad specimen of that
to myself I must say that it appears
but I cannot help it now.

'You are perfectly right when y
I had "intimately shared in the v
sufferings of my brother." I coul
be his preceptor; but I was his el
and some months, and the greater
instruction which he received in ea
municated by me. Afterwards t
little schemes were prosecuted to
have taken a part in almost the wh
projects, had they succeeded; whi

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a some others in which I failed:
ng to some little experience which
a building dykes, that we ventured
putting up a house. We had been
each other from infancy; and when
vay, what remained appeared to be
wreck. Even now, I am sometimes
k that the dispensation which called
a hard one; but such was the will
must not murmur, though I cannot

t.
illings I retain, not without some
conscience, for the purchase of "Hy-
ich I shall order the bookseller in
get me to-morrow; and when I have
paste the card bearing your name
r, and regard it as a present with
been favoured for the purpose of
as much good to suffering humanity
This, as you will see at a glance, is
which I am endeavouring to reconcile
idea of taking money for which I can
n return.
be that it may not be wholly uninter-
, I also enclose a rude lithograph of
place where my brother and myself
long. It was given as a frontispiece
tion of his "Life and Poems;" and as
k it must be a copy of the second edi-
ou have seen, it will at least have the

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recommendation of being new to you. Should book ever be reprinted, I agree in thinking the frontispiece might be restored, and other "vi added. If it would not be deemed imperti some time afterwards I should be happy to such a sketch as I could myself take of the s monument which was erected last spring ov grave of its humble author.

'I should still have much to say, were it no the time which I can at present spare is exha and I cannot think of delaying this shee longer. I am aware, however, that I have almost nothing in the way of answering you interesting letter; but the only thing that I more at present is, to beg you to excuse, in manner you can, the foregoing hurried scra one who is, with much respect, Your very servant,

In answer to subsequent communica closing some interesting narrative tracts questing a sketch of his present habitatio find him writing as follows:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT *by* NE
'FIFE, *October* 22*nd*,

'Dear Friend,—I beg to present yo rude views of the house in which I now rough sketch of the monument which I able to place over my brother's gra

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badness of the "drawing," the only apology which I can make, is to say, that I never got a single lesson in the art from any one, and never read a single paragraph upon the subject. Having little wherewith to pay an artist for taking a sketch of Lochend—the picture which I sent you before—I tried it myself; and this was my very first attempt at drawing. I failed, however, and had to pay for the thing after all. But I found that I could make out a sort of rough likeness of the place, and it was a recollection of this which emboldened me to speak about sending you a sketch of the monument. The present is I think only my third attempt at drawing. I have read with deep interest both the tracts which you sent me—in the case of the last, not unmingled with indignation at the Americans for their treatment of the noble-minded and disinterested E. P. Lovejoy.—My best thanks to you for both. I remain Your very humble friend and servant,

A. B.'

Though declining all assistance himself, Mr. Bethune was forward in proffering it to others; and, as was to be supposed, ingenious in devising modes of doing so, the likeliest not to wound delicacy of feeling—as the following communications to a worthy friend of his, dependent on the labour of his hands for the support of himself and family, and who was threatened with consumption, will show:—

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DELICATE BENEVOLENCE.

'Mountpleas ant, N

'Dear Sir,—I have been a
about you since I heard from good
you had caught more cold. Mrs.
as careful of yourself as you et me
humble, but highly useful possi
which you occupy, you are and cr
could ill spare. Numbers have fel
influence of those prayers which
up by the bed-side of sick and
These have been sought after and
world, with all its emoluments
ambition or enjoyment had shr
Among others, I hope you will a
my gratitude for your attentio
mented brother, when near the
earthly career. For the sake o
and for the benefit of society, I
You well again, as soon as possi
I must be pardoned for agai
junction to be careful of yours
if possible, to get that sort of
best with your stomach. So
is kept up, the stomach ca
wonted tone; and while it is
must be weak also. Diseas
often a tendency to depress
people take gloomy views c
and of every thing around t
must strive, by endeavourin

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easy, with respect to the future, as
n answer to the foregoing, I almost
hear you saying, "All this is very fine,
with a very good grace from one who
; to do but give advice to his neigh-
who knows nothing of what I have to
t!" Such, I doubt not, will be your
what you feel, with a family of children
for, and cut off from your usual employ-
l it is this that makes me sympathize
the more readily and the more deeply.
intime, simply to save myself from being
th those who say, "Be ye warmed, and
d, yet give none of those things which are
r the body," I have ventured to enclose
all trifle, of which I would now beg your
e——or, to speak more properly, for which
beg your pardon. I must also beg you
mention the circumstance to any one—far
yself, for we are enjoined "not to let our
l know what our right hand doth." * *
that those whose ability may be greater,
nore liberal; and, though it is my earnest
l prayer that you may be speedily restored
wonted employment—if Providence, for
ds, should see meet to lengthen out the
of your affliction for a little longer—still I
not have you to be too anxious; for I do
ld trust, that a deserving, and really good

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man, will never be allowed to feel even the
want. Hoping that you will never lack that
fort which passeth understanding, and begging
pardon for this hurried scrawl——I remain,
Sir, Yours truly,

A.

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *Feb.* 6,

'Dear Sir,—Pardon me for venturing
you the enclosed trifle. I have not time
you how I came by it, farther than that
price of a story which I had intended to
your service. I had devised some means
veying it to you, without letting you know
had any hand in the matter, but they failed
I am loath to lose time in forming new
hope you will pardon me for adopting the
plan. I can only beg you, further, never
tion it either to myself or any one else.
now got some information on the respirator,
I will be glad to communicate. With best
I am, dear Sir, Yours, very sincerely,

A.

As explanatory of the extract which foll
transcribe a sentence or two of a letter to
from the friend who was the object of Mr. B.
benevolent exertions and devices:—'I recei
letter after he came home from Glasgow, h
very anxious about my recovery, and the
the respirator as a preventive of
urged me to get one; at the same time

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pound into my pocket. Quite overcome with his kindness, I accepted it, on condition that I would use it for that purpose, if I required it; and if not, it would go as part payment of some doors I had to make for him. On finding myself recovering, I wrote him to the effect that I would not need the respirator, and would only use the money I received as payment of the above-mentioned work; and this was the answer I received:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *March* 29, 1841.

'My Dear Friend,—I received yours of the 26th to-day, and I cannot tell you how much pleasure it gives me to hear that you are getting better. Let me however, endeavour to impress upon your mind the necessity of still paying strict attention to yourself, and being particularly careful not to catch cold. In taking exercise, you must also be careful not to fatigue yourself; to do so must necessarily retard, rather than facilitate your recovery. But I need not trouble you with such injunctions; for by this time you must doubtless know what agrees with you, and what does not; and in these cases experience is better than a doctor. Though I was anxious that you should have got a respirator, I am glad to hear that you are getting better without one; and I trust the money which should have gone for it, will be useful to you or your family in some other way. You must not, however, think of applying it as part of the debt which I owe you for

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the doors—that I will pay you as soon as I can spare it, else I should not have of and when I am called to a final reckonin have enow sins to account for, though ha edness should not be among the number. the strongest of us and the grave there span, and short as is the space, it must be diminished with those whose constitutions, li have been nearly worn out by accidents, bour, night watching, and anxiety.

Among those in whom admiration and sy for Mr. Bethune were excited by the perusa Life and Poems of his brother, were George author of 'The Constitution of Man,' and ther, Dr. Andrew Combe. Both of these ge presented him with their works; the forme him the honour of requesting his critical opi his "Moral Philosophy" and "Notes on An The following extracts are from one of Mr. Be to Mr. George Combe:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, March 1, 1

'Dear Sir, * * * *

* * I, or I should rather say w there were two of us,) were too sanguine in o ticipations of human improvement—but to b perhaps the fault of youth; and, with a lit flection, it might have been easy to foresee would take ages to accomplish the change wh

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had supposed might be effected in a few years, or in a single lifetime at most. I should be glad if the period could be by any means shortened, and I know that "society" might possess the power of doing it; but at present, it puts forth its energies in a wrong direction. We almost uniformly bestow approbation, or what is nearly the same thing, homage, humble obedience, and even flattery upon riches and power: men see this, and almost every individual who has either talents or ambition, is anxious to get rich as fast as possible, that he may thereby make himself an object of respect to those who are below him. Riches, in most instances, can only be acquired by giving full scope to the principle of selfishness; and this principle, or organ, being constantly stimulated by the love of approbation, and the expectation of obtaining it, appears soon to grow into a state of such activity, as to make men generally turn a deaf ear to every in- in which selfishness is not in some way or other terested. It is upon this point that my despondency, if despondency it be, rests: this I consider the grand cause which retards the commencement that condition of society which every philanthropist would wish to see established; and it appears to me that the strenuous efforts of enlightened individuals will be necessary for a length of time to make a proba- tion run in the proper channel. I do not mention these things as if they could possibly be new to you —as a philosopher, they must have attracted your

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observation long ere now;—but simply to sho
I have thought and pondered over your bene
theory more than you had perhaps suppo
I think I have been the means of commu
at least, a partial knowledge of it to some qu
which otherwise it would have hardly re
Besides lending the work to every one of
quaintances who I thought could read and
stand it, in the course of conversation I was
to exert any little influence which I possess
my own class, in endeavouring to make people
gal and industrious; and in doing this I always
gan by referring them to that portion of "The
stitution of Man" where you speak of the strong
bability that missionaries going out to convert
heathen, and embarking in a worn-out vessel, or wi
unskilful seamen, would be drowned; while a con
pany of profligates, by prudently selecting a stou
vessel and good sailors, might pass over the watery
element in perfect safety. After having stated this
powerful argument, and noticed briefly the tenor of
the work from which it was drawn, I endeavoured
to convince them that Providence, to which they were
often in the habit of referring the whole of their
good or bad fortune, wrought systematically, and
by fixed laws—that the same causes uniformly pro-
duced the same effects; and that it was as vain for
them to expect that Providence would make them
comfortable, and enable them to live independently
upon their own earnings, without being industrious

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and economical, as it would be to expect to escape drowning while they embarked in a ship which must unavoidably go to the bottom with the first gale. My poor brother was even more zealous in the cause than I was myself: so far as he had become acquainted with the Laws of Nature, when circumstances would at all permit, he was inclined to keep them even to punctiliousness; and when he died, I could not help coming to the conclusion that, in the present state of society, no man could keep these laws, so as to derive much benefit from his endeavours to do so. As to "infringement" and "punishment" being inseparably connected, his brief career affords several striking examples. The seeds of disease were first implanted in his system, by bathing in fresh water, which he persisted in through ignorance of his own constitution; and afterwards he narrowly escaped being sent to his grave by the consequences of having been employed at those sorts of work which were almost certain to prove destructive of health. In the last case, however, he had no choice, and no control over the selfishness of his employers; and therefore, he was not to blame. It was these circumstances which made him so anxious to teach others how they might avoid those errors from which he had himself suffered; and I had once some thoughts of noticing them in this point of view, but it occurred to me that as the rich would have been implicated, they might have construed the attempt into a wish to lessen the hardships of my own

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situation, and increase my own comfo
which I could not brook; and therefore,
myself with a simple statement of facts a
You overrate my influence when you su
I could "shame the rich into improveme
assure you that a writer in the very h
very obscure station which I occupy, wou
to exercise the greatest caution to avoid
down their vengeance upon himself, inste
citing shame for their own conduct. I
however, forget the hints which you have
kind as to favour me with; and whatever
for the labourious poor, my endeavours, a
will not be awanting. If the Laws of Nat
to be kept, in any thing like perfection, it
by the concurrence of society as a whole
isolated individuals.

'I shall be most happy to avail myself
order which you have sent me for your "Moral
losophy," and I anticipate much benefit from

A.

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CHAPTER IX.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE EDITOR—VISIT TO ABERDEENSHIRE—EXCURSION TO DEESIDE HIGHLANDS—NOT ENTHUSIASTIC IN HIS ADMIRATION OF ROMANTIC SCENERY—DIFFERENT KIND OF TASTE, ILLUSTRATED BY EXTRACT FROM 'DAY DREAMS'—'THE RUIN'—RETURNS HOME BY ABERDEEN—PROJECTED STORY OF THE DON—HE VISITS EDINBURGH—PUBLICATION OF 'SCOTTISH PEASANT'S FIRESIDE'—CHARACTER OF THAT WORK—TALE OF JONATHAN MOUDIWORT—EXTRACT FROM 'THINGS AND THOUGHTS.'

My interest in Mr. Bethune was first excited by the perusal of an article in the Athenæum on his brother's 'Life and Poems.' On reading that article, I lost no time in ordering the book itself; but it was then out of print, and it was a considerable time ere I could procure it. The very strong interest excited by its perusal, induced me to address a short letter to Mr. Bethune, in which I made some inquiries regarding his brother's unpublished writings, particularly those of a humorous character, as well as in regard to his own situation in life, having heard some vague rumours of his being engaged somewhere in connexion with the prisons.

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In a few days I was gra
and afterwards by an ans
following are extracts :—

'MOUNTPLEAS
'My Dear Sir,—I have
of the 14th inst., which re
ago. Had I been at home,
to acknowledge it earlier ;
in the harvest, at a place
tant, where, as a matter
throughout the week, this
power. My engagement w
probably, a fortnight to co
only write a few hurried l
received your much esteem
most gratifying to me to l
by a kindred spirit ; but as
leisure, I will endeavour to
if possible, to send you a n
of the pieces which you men

'MOUNTPLEAS.
'My Dear Sir,—Having
harvest, it is with much pl
up a pen again to address
conceive the amount of sati
me to learn that you had be
my deceased brother, "with
terest." This may proceed

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nature; but, if it be so, it is one to which I at once plead guilty. From there being only two of us, and from the peculiar circumstances in which we were placed, we were all the world to each other: now, when he is gone, my world may be said to be annihilated; and the greatest satisfaction which I can enjoy, is to hear that others, and more particularly those who are qualified to form a correct judgment, can appreciate his humble virtues. For me, I have done nothing, save narrated a few simple facts in the plainest and simplest manner I possibly could—it having been my firm determination when I began to write his Life, that I would carefully avoid everything like "colouring," or an attempt to "make the most" of any incident. Had it been otherwise, from having had some little experience in the art of giving effect to a story by the manner of telling it, I might perhaps have contrived to throw more of what an ordinary reader would call interest, into the pages of his biography.

'In looking over those parts of my brother's papers which I had transcribed, and have still lying beside me, I find that I have not copies of the two poems which I had in my eye, when I mentioned his wit, and humour. These were "Love in a Barrel,"* and "Johnie Craigie's Wedding"—the first consisting of about twenty pages, and the last of ten pages, of manuscript such as the enclosed. They

* See Appendix, No. 2.

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were sent to Bristol, to
& Albert—a choice of
second edition; and th
others, have not yet be
closed pieces, however,
morous cast, will, I ho
I said was not altogethe

'It would give me th
able to publish these, an
productions, in a third
books, and more especia
time, is a most precario
very questionable if ano
be required. Publisher
consulted in these matte
lish wholly at his own ri
that the publishers of the
enlarged it to two vol
they not been dissuaded
mery in the same lette
published as an introduc

'If you should feel an
of his prose productions,
in "Wilson's Tales of t
contributed the following
Vanity;" vol. IV. No. 2C
dent;" vol. V. No. 220; "
No. 247; "The Cruise of
248; and "The Factor;"
stories were spoilt by ar

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them to the nature of the work for which they were intended; and their interest still farther destroyed by being terribly cut down in proof, to bring them within the compass of a single number. In justice to his memory, I may be allowed to say, that their author was induced to try this species of writing, solely because it was the only means which presented itself of procuring a little money at a time when that was with us a very scarce article. Trifling as is the kind of literature to which they belong, I could almost wish you to see these stories; and, were it not that the carriage would exceed the price of them, I would send you copies.—I am, with the greatest respect, Dear Sir, Yours very sincerely,

A. B.'

The following letter may be acceptable to the reader, as furnishing at one view a bibliographical history of Mr. Bethune's various publications:—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *Nov.* 3, 1841.

'My Dear Sir,—I again beg to enclose for you a copy of the two pieces* of my brother's, which I mentioned as having sent in my last; and which must have certainly been carried away by the wind, in the way you notice, for I am almost confident that they left this place under seal.

* *Two of the* humorous pieces referred to in a previous *letter.*

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'I have done but little in a literary way of
Three articles, which were printed in "Cham
Journal;" together with three or four others, wh
were rejected, comprise the amount of my writ
last summer. I must say, that I really have
more leisure for writing than I once had; but
feel, at the same time, that I want that restless a
untiring activity of mind and body, which once
abled me to accomplish a good deal with but scant
opportunities. Indifferent health, and depressio
of spirits are not very favourable to literary pur
suits; and that these should now be, to a certain
extent, my portion, you will hardly wonder, when
you know that I have been twice thrown into the
air by gunpowder, and on both occasions narrowly
escaped with my life—that for three months, during
my brother's last illness, I scarcely ever enjoyed
more than an hour and a half's sleep out of the
twenty-four—and that for nearly five months pre-
vious to the 21st of December last, the time at which
my mother died, my clothes had never been off, ex-
cept to shift my shirt. Those feelings, too, which
may be experienced but cannot be described, and
that deep anxiety of mind which was inseparable
from my situation—destined to watch in solitude,
from hour to hour, and day to day, the downward
progress of disease—the slow and sure decay of a
last friend, struck speechless, and almost motion-
less, by repeated shocks of palsy,—these things,
taken together, have told fearfully upon a consti-

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tution which was not originally very feeble; and now I might almost regard myself as a "doomed man," who is only reprieved for short intervals. Still, however, I have plans in my head, which I only want time and spirits to prosecute. Last winter, I had copied, and prepared for the press, as many of my brother's "Letters and Essays" as would make, perhaps, about 150 pages of letter-press, the same size as the volume now published. There are still some pretty long Essays to copy, as well as a number of unpublished Stories; and, if I could get time to prepare as much Manuscript as would make a volume of 320 pages, or thereby, I would try some publisher with it. In the event of doing so, I need scarcely say, that it were folly to expect to realize anything; but still it would gratify those feelings with which I am inclined to regard the memory of a departed friend. * * *

* * * * * * * *

I have, besides, nearly as many unpublished Stories of my own as, with some slight corrections, would make another volume of "Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry;" and a pretty long didactic poem, in blank verse, entitled, "Confessions of Convalescence,"* which, along with some others, might be published separately. The preparation of such a mass of matter, is a work which I can scarcely

* Another title for 'Day Dreams,' as the reader may recollect being mentioned at the commencement of extracts from that poem.

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expect to live to accomplish. Had I been a
was, the task would have been an easy one
now find, that a short time of confinemen
house, and close application to these pursuits
entirely destroy the little remains of vigour
I possess. A considerable portion of my
moreover, must be devoted to earning my
bread, in one way or other; and even thoug
whole were ready for printing, the greatest
culty of all would remain to be surmoun
namely, that of getting publishers to under
the risk of such speculations. The entire
right of "Tales and Sketches," &c., which is
out of print, was disposed of for fifty copies of
work. "Practical Economy," as stated in
brother's "Life," was literally given away
nothing; and still the publisher will probably
loser. Concerning the first edition of the "
and Poems," an acquaintance, who was him
connected with a printing office, gave me distinc
to understand, that no publisher would undert
the risk of bringing it out; and so it was publish
at my own expense, and cleared somewhat
than twenty pounds—the greater part of
will go, in a few weeks, to place a monument ov
the grave of its poor author. The second editi
is brought out by the same house which publishe
"Foster's Essay;" and it was at one time proposed t
include it in the series of which the above-mentioned
work forms a part. This idea, however, was ulti-

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ven up; and the publishers have the copy-
on the principle that I am to have one
he clear profits, which, after deducting
s and bookseller's commission—the ex-
material and workmanship in printing
ng, advertising, &c., &c., from the selling
y be, as nearly as I can guess, about
fpence per copy. I have now tried to
l acquainted with as much of my history,
l concerns as I could possibly cram into a
et; and, hoping that you will not be of-
th the freedom which I have taken, I
glad to hear, in return, how you contrive
with your publishers—that is, if you have
lar reason for keeping it a secret. I had
gotten to say, that I still live in one of
of the house to which you allude, where
have almost become those of a hermit.
ave told you, too, that the Bristol com-
d a communication about the publishing
k, of their own accord. But for this, I
e never thought of applying to them.
t regret the distance at which we live
other more than I do. I can seldom
e and the means for travelling together;
I should take a "jaunt," it will be to
ire. Begging your pardon for this long
scrawl, which I can scarcely find time
hout losing the post.—I remain, dear
very sincerely, A. B.'

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The first of the followi
what is stated above (pag
reasons why Mr. Bethune
cuniary advantage from the
ther's 'Life and Poems.'
lieve, regard it as an insta
out to the romantic :—

'MOUNTPLEASA

'Dear Sir,—Being now t
gladly seize the opportunity
at least, part of the debt.
day last, I received, and r
your account of your life
respects, how like my own!
somewhat different.

'Though the first edition
and Poems" was a four sh
mentioned in the prospectu
lings, and at this it was sold
who, between himself and h
ken to dispose of 100 cop
lings for the book; and I
got some trifles beside, in
all events I got £22 from hi
I accepted, being at the t
means of ministering to the
ralytic mother, whose life, I
should be able to prolong b
attention. But after her d
w

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every farthing which did not exclusively be-
to me; and I have now returned four pounds, and
still remains. This may appear an extremely
ng affair; but, from my earnings being only
een sixteen-pence and eighteen-pence a day,
what with want of work in these dull times,
vals devoted to writing—that most profitless
l employments—and a summer of indifferent
h—really I get on but slowly in these mat-

Had I chosen it, however, I might have been
mparatively easy circumstances; for various
of money, some of them from England, have
forwarded to me by benevolent individuals who
ead the book; but these I have uniformly re-
d, thanking my intended benefactors, and as-
them that, as I could still provide for my
vants, I should not consider myself at all jus-
in becoming a burden on society.—The only
e which I can offer for this long chapter of
m is, that part of it is an excuse, as you will
or my own parsimony; and for the rest, like
Bunyan,

"Having got my story by the end;
Still as I pull'd it came, and so I penn'd."

have not left myself room to tell you how
I was gratified to hear that you were pleased
my departed brother's humble attempts at
ure, both in prose and verse. Poor boy! he

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knew, from experience, but t
live in a house pervious to "

'May I ask, if ever you h
applied to the Preservation
Combe, M. D.? or "The Pl
considered with relation to
author? If you have not, I
a reading of the copies which
are works which, I think, sh
but studied and acted upon
who sets any value upon th
poral blessings, health. I
them in some of the librar
hood; and if not, the next
to spend seven shillings and
I would have you to buy "
Health." The mere knowl
nomy which it is calculated
money.

'I did see the "Chapter
Man," in Chambers' Edinb
it with a feeling of deep sy
nate author. Even now, w
to have arrived, I can still
but his present patrons wi
selves entitled to exact a d
titude, under which he may
world for poets, particular

* See 'The Bewildered Student

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have only room to say farther, that I am, Yours very sincerely, A. B.'

The following letter, as it discloses some of the effects of severe manual labour, in connexion with the comfortless solitude of Mr. Bethune's dwelling, will no doubt excite the sympathy of the reader :—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, *April* 3, 1842.

'My dear Sir,—I now feel quite ashamed of myself. Your last letter, dated Feb. 15th, has been in my hands somewhere about six weeks, without one word of acknowledgement or reply. A few days ago too, a copy of your "Moral Agency" was handed to me: so that being at present, in so many respects your debtor, I am glad to lay hold of even a portion of the day of rest, as you will perceive from the date at the top of the sheet, simply to acknowledge my obligation. This silence on my part has not been altogether a willing one. It is long since I had intended to send you "The Orphan Wanderer,"* which I now enclose, together with some manuscript productions of the same author, (not sent at present,) and a few verses of my own which were composed beside the lifeless remains of that brother to whom they refer. But of late I have been constantly employed, and when this is the case, with respect to writing in the evenings, I now find that it is widely different with me from what it was when

* By his brother.

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my friends were alive.
pared to make me as c
would admit of at my
day,—and the evening,
available for any purpo
to devote it; but now w
velling two or three mil
at which I have been em
go for milk, kindle fire,
such other things about
able; and by the time I
matters, the evening in
that I am good for not
have, moreover, always
in Scotch Phrase, *hacki*
season: they are alway
the evil has increased t
very few attempts at
forced to make, I have
in wielding a pen, besi
being wholly unintelligi
gether have made me
time, and have at last d
to which I have now re
I expect to be busy; bu
season is over, digging
pal occupation, I shall
than will be altogether
expect to hear more of

'I must not forget t

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"Knockespock's Lady," by W. Thom: I had seen previously "The Mitherless Bairn." There is true poetry in both, but the last is, I think, better than the first. Mr. T.'s principal fault, I apprehend, is being too locally Scotch: such words as "litheless,* litheness," and "meen,"† would I fear, hardly be generally understood. But this subject too, must be postponed to a future opportunity. By and by, I will be able to give you some information about

* *Lithe*, is any out of door shelter, such as a bank, a bush of furze or broom, &c., and is peculiarly associated with the experience of a herd, or tender of cattle in a cold blustering day. To the natives of Aberdeenshire and the contiguous districts, most of whom in early life have been employed in the capacity of 'herds,' this word and its derivatives have a peculiar expressiveness and pathos. I do not know a truer stroke of pathetic, than the line of the poem in question—

'And litheless the latr of the Mitherless Bairn.'

a pathos which I conceive, it would be quite impossible to transfer into English, there being no corresponding word.

In the dialect of the south-west of Scotland, *bield* comes near to it in meaning; as we find Burns addressing the daisy as springing

'Beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane.'

But *lithe* has the advantage over *bield*, of being used as an adjective as well as a substantive; as for instance, it is quite common to say in regard to a place that has a better shelter than another—'It's lither here.'

† Moon.

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a memoir of my grandfa
ther in 1836, which I ex
course of the coming s
which was mentioned in
I next write.—I remain,
cerely, Yours,

About the end of Jul
his contemplated visit t
way he called on John
Guynd, near Arbroath,
a great interest in the su
larly of the "Life and P
was from home. Hav
from Newburgh to Dun
to Arbroath, Mr. Bethu
all the rest of the jour
of fifty miles. One co
from such a man, involv
tion, and it was no sm
Bethune's short stay wit
to take him about to see
scenery in the neighbou
Deeside to the foot of L
made the ascent of tha
the boisterous state of
matter of very great re
myself,—though, even
of that object, the rid
point the most intens

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soul is capable of being fired by romantic and sublime scenery. Mr. Bethune, though he enjoyed the scenery much, did not seem susceptible of a very high degree of this enthusiasm: his taste lay rather among the quieter beauties of nature, and the varieties of human character. I recollect, on another day, when driving from Alford to Auchindoir, and remarking on the striking and picturesque views afforded by that delightful ride, he remarked with a sigh, how much his brother would have enjoyed such scenery;—and when, as illustrative of the effect which such scenery had upon some minds, I recited that noble passage in the first book of the Excursion beginning:—

"What soul was his, when from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up and bathe the world in light!"*

he could not enter into its spirit—could indeed hardly regard it as other than a piece of senti-

* He looked—
Ocean and earth—the solid frame of earth,
And ocean's liquid mass beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces he did read
Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him: they swallowed up
His animal being, in them did he live,
And by them did he live—they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not—in enjoyment it expired."

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mental raving.
ridge, the produc
uneasiness and ir
a susceptibility o
that Mr. Bethun
an eye capable o
by the more sul
pecially by thos
of rural quietude
with his tales ca
just presented its
Dreams," not hitl
ral associations
fine sunset in lat
out :—

Time speeds hi
* *
The sun hath
Man pauses—l
Nor sees, nor
Which measur
Which knows
From year to

The sun hath
The ray he sh
Pure as the pe
When kindled
Wandering to
* *

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ut yet there is a melancholy tinge
that rich radiance—and a passing thought
of things departed, and of days gone by,
At such an hour insensibly will weave
itself into the texture of the scene.
Nothing departs alone—the dying day
Bears with it many to their last repose;
The setting sun so gorgeously arrayed
In beams of light, and curtained round about
With clouds steeped in the rainbow's richest dyes,
So fair—so full of light and living glory—
That with the ancient Persian one might deem
Him God of all he looks upon below.
His setting ushers in a night to some
Which morning shall not break.

* * * *

The hour of evening hath a solemn voice
Which seems to woo the soul to meditation—
And I will meditate awhile to-night,
Or rather dream my idleness away.

* * * * *

In the course of our journey up Deeside, I remember, speaking of early recollections, I proposed that he should give me a sketch of the development of his mind and literary tastes; which he agreed to do in a series of Letters. Since commencing the compilation of this volume, I have often had cause to regret that he should not have lived to carry this into effect; and have sometimes felt inclined to reproach myself that, during the period which elapsed between this and his being

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taken ill, short though it was, I had
rect effort to induce him to make a cor
—'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to d
thy might.'

My late friend was keenly alive
both social and moral, connected with
tion of small farms, which, for a seri
have been undergoing a process of
into the larger, until what has hithe
ted the worthiest and most virtuous
rural population is threatened with
hilation. It would be quite out of
to institute any inquiry as to the c
have led to this system, or any expos
evils it induces. We are glad, however
that these last are beginning to attra
tion of a rising and influential party in
a party which, however wrong we ma
many of its theories and assumptio
doubt not, an important sphere to occu
to act in counteraction of that inordi
gain-seeking, as well as of that gro
tion of the middle and upper, from
classes, which are among the most unhe
toms of our social state.

To some of his impressions and feel
gard to the system in question Mr. Be
given utterance in the following apologue
well recollect his reading to me during o
excursions. My friend's elocution did no
means tend to set off the merits of the com

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ıe had, especially in reading verse, a drawling, g-song way of pronouncing; yet, now that he is ıe, there is a charm connected with the recollection the tones in which these simple verses were recited. ıd the piece has another affecting association, ving been one of the very few he was able to give e from his own hand when I visited him on his eath-bed. The reader acquainted with his two olumes of Tales, will recognise its affinity with everal of the pieces interspersed through these —the principal charm of which is a simplicity approaching to the style of our early ballads. When my friend read the piece to me, I objected to some of the verses as flat, or of lame construction, and have now omitted several which still seemed chargeable with these faults:—

'THE RUIN.'

By yonder ruin desolate,
Upon the mountain hoar;
Shaded in lonely solitude,
By the tall sycamore,—

Musing upon this changing scene,
I lingered on my way,
Till shadows of the eventide
Announced the close of day.

It was a place where man had been,
With all his hopes and fears;
And woman's gentler spirit there
Had melted into tears.

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It was a place where ho
Had left the scene of
Where youth had loved,
Been ushered into life

And there a thousand im
Of days and years gon
Like the illusions of a dr
Flitted before my eye.

There, as I stood in mus
Methought a spirit wol
Among the rustling leave
In deepest accents spok

" Stranger, I pray thee,
And listen to me now ;
And thou wilt pause, I ri
Even by thy thoughtful

" Three centuries of sun
Have o'er my branches
Since first upon my infant
The summer sunbeam s

" Long, long above that h
I broke the midnight bl
And o'er the cottagers at
A pleasing shadow cast ;

" And since all tenantless
These ruined walls have
Full thirty years of solitud
My hoary trunk hath see

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"But though I ne'er again shall hear
The clarion of the cock,
Which wont the morning watch to mark
To those who had no clock;

"And though long years have o'er me passed,
With weary steps and slow,
Since I have heard the lover's vow,
Whispered in accents low;

"And though no more, with busy hum,
The children round me play—
Though quenched the fire, and cold the hearth,
And all gone to decay,—

"Still, in the memory of a tree,
A long, long story lives,
Of things which to the heart of man
Its pain or pleasure gives—

"A story of the ceaseless change,
With never-ending flow,
Which marks the destinies of men,
And their affairs below.

"In days, now numbered with the past,
Which have been long forgot,
When the simplicity of truth
Adorned each lowly cot

"With all a peasant's homely joys,
And piety sincere,
And hopes of immortality,
Which triumph'd over fear.

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" Industrious, fruga
From vain ambitio
They cherish'd no un
And feared not per

" Beyond their needfu
And dress of hodde
Their humble wishes
Their thoughts ne'e

" As seasons rolled, t
Duly at eve and mor
Rose from that lowly c
To heaven's high co

" Then rose the prayer
For fortitude to bear
While secret sins, befor
Were all acknowledg

" The look of conscious
Which beamed forth i
The heart which gave th
Of natural sympathy :

" These shed a charm aro
Which even I could shar
The charm of nature and of
Of piety and prayer.

"And when the hoary patria
Was near his journey's end
His children's children might
In sorrow o'er him bending

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"By his example on their souls,
Stern virtue was impress'd;
And firm resolve and fortitude
Implanted in each breast.

And counsels, precepts, looks, and words,
By them remembered long—
Uprose, like angel-sentinels,
To guard their hearts from wrong.

"Here, also, have I seen the maid
Dance lightly in the sun,
When Spring to deck the freshening fields
In bright robes had begun.

"I've heard her sing, in heartfelt joy,
With voice as wild and sweet,
As is the lark's when springing up
The dappling dawn to greet.

"But soon her glee and frolic gone—
Her laugh, by thought subdued,
Told that the 'elder tale of love'
In her must be renewed.

"That 'tale' her altered mien betray'd—
Her musings lone and strange;
Her fitful bursts of merriment—
Her eye's expressive change.

"Whene'er a light, young step drew near,
The blush her cheek would cover,
Her fluttering heart, half hope, half fear,
Leaped instant to her lover.

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" Pure as the sno
The green turf
And innocent as i
That maiden's

" It was a heart t
That made her
Bright as the rain
When seen on

" These were the
In which my me
From which my ti
Of pleasure still

" But since the de
Upon the land h
That incubus of al
The everlasting

" And since the co
No more may off
Such as the landlor
Amalgamated far

" Since ' milk and m
May bless the labo
Nor house, nor home
By meadow or by m

* In what it here says, the tree w
right or wrong; as an individual who
its supposed site, and of whom it mus
state the circumstance of his having '

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'THE RUIN.'

"I've seen the country desolate,
Its cottages thrown down;
Poor labourer, artizan, and all
Driven to the smoky town.

"There, forced to breathe an atmosphere
Of stagnate, smoky air—
They turn their longing eyes in vain
To where their fathers were.

"Far from the cooling, mountain stream,
And fresh, green mountain slopes,
Their days are spent amid the dust
Of factories and shops.

"There, oft, the hapless youth, ensnared
By an unhallowed charm,
No longer feels the purer flame
Which should his bosom warm.

"There, too, the blush of modesty
Forsakes the maiden's cheek,
And leaves the heart it wont to guard,
Unfortified and weak.

"In vain I mourn the roofless cots,
And ruined walls around;
And waving corn upon the spots
Where hearth-stones once were found.

"Gold is the god men worship now,
With never-ceasing care;
Nor heed they who may live or die,
While they the spoil can share.

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"The rich, in boundless vanity,
Spend every passing day;
The poor ape their fantastic tricks—
Even all as best they may.

"And, save when dire necessity
Their vain desires hath shorn,
None seem to have a higher aim
Than butterflies at morn.

"Go, tell these words to such as they—
Go, tell them they are sooth;
Though mankind men must flatter here,
Yet I may speak the truth!"

The impressions in regard to the amiable qualities of Mr. Bethune's character, which his writings and some little correspondence with him had produced on our minds, were verified and deepened by the brief period of personal intercourse we were privileged to enjoy with him. It would have delighted us could he have prolonged his stay; but harvest being about to commence in Fife, he had to hasten away, being engaged as a shearer. He returned by way of Aberdeen, whither I had the pleasure of accompanying him. Through the kind attentions of one or two friends, to whose care I left him, and who deemed themselves honoured in having him for a guest, he saw the principal objects of interest connected with that ancient city; among others, the 'Auld brig of Balgownie,' renowned in tradition-

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ary prophecy, when he seems to have received impressions, which, had he lived, he would probably have turned to literary account, as the reader may see from the following hints for a

STORY OF THE DON.

'A young man in Aberdeen is warmly attached to a servant girl in the same place. In time they fall out. Shortly after, the girl goes abroad late of an evening and is no more heard of. Some hair, supposed to be hers, and apparently torn out in a struggle, is found below the bridge of Balgownie; and her lover is tried for murdering her, but acquitted. Shortly after, he becomes melancholy and enlists. When in the army, his curiosity is excited by a young and handsome officer of a half melancholy half ferocious disposition. At the battle of ——— this officer is mortally wounded, and when dying, tells him he was the murderer of his former sweetheart,' &c.

Our friend left us, we had hoped, somewhat recruited in spirits; but on his arrival at home his mind received a severe shock from learning of a melancholy occurrence which had taken place in the family of his nearest neighbour and worthy friend, Mrs. Ferguson—the same who had so sedulously attended to his brother during his last illness, and who was soon to have the same melan-

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choly duties to discharge towards himself.
lowing is an extract from a letter Mr.
wrote me the day after his arrival at hom

'MOUNTPLEASANT, August 10

'Dear Sir,—I now hasten to apprize yo
safe arrival at home yesterday afternoon.
have been inclined to give you a half-ludicr
count of my voyage to Arbroath, and of t
sickness, &c., of my fellow passengers, of w
should think there was something more th
average amount; but, since I left home, one
nearest neighbours has been called to another w
and I feel that I am in no mood for indulgin
such descriptions. Little more than four years
Mrs. Ferguson, with whose name you must be
miliar, lost her husband, who was an elder of
Secession Congregation, and a most pious and
emplary individual. In the interval which
elapsed since then, her eldest son had grown
and bade fair to supply his place as the head of t
family. But on Monday was eight days—the da
on which we were at Insch—he had gone, for
little recreation, with the salmon fishers; and, whil
bathing, stepped over the precipitous front of a sand
bank in the river, and, sad to tell, was drowned!
His body was not recovered till the following morn-
ing, when the fishers, after many fruitless attempts,
and when they were just on the point of giving up
the search, succeeded in dragging it ashore with a

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net. He had completed his twentieth year about two months ago, and for industry and sobriety had few equals. I need hardly say that his mother is bowed down by a weight of sorrow, from which it is questionable if she will ever recover. I am, Dear Sir, Yours very sincerely, A. B.'

When the harvest was concluded, Mr. Bethune paid a visit to Edinburgh with the view of making arrangements for the publication of 'The Scottish Peasant's Fireside.' Messrs. Adam and Charles Black agreed to publish the book, taking all the risk and engaging to allow the author half of the clear profits which might arise from the sale. The volume appeared in the month of February, 18[illegible]3. It is of similar size with the 'Tales and Sketches of the Scottish Peasantry;' and as was the case in that volume, there are interspersed among the prose tales several pieces in verse. In distinctness of portraiture and interest, the stories, in general, are not inferior to those of the previous volume; but we are not sure that we recognise so often that peculiar delicacy of touch in the delineation of female character; and we sometimes desiderate the critical pruning knife of our author's literary friend, to whose revision it is rather to be regretted that this volume had not, like the rest of his writings, been subjected.

Of all the stories in the volume that entitled 'Jonathan Moudiwort' has taken the most hold of our

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imagination; and perhaps of all the characters
Bethune has sketched, that of Jonathan
the greatest distinctness of outline and bold
individuality. The distinctive lines of the
ter of Mrs. Evergreen, too, are very happy;
the filling up is carelessly executed. Indeed,
whole story, though admirably conceived,
marks of great haste, and of the want of
vere revision; exhibiting in several places
dundancy of words and unclassical modes of
sion, which, under the well-directed excision.
severe taste would have suffered
notwithstanding of these faults
deeper impression of reality.
we may, perhaps, be pardoned for
when we thought of commending,
one, that scene in which Mrs. Evergreen
sented as scolding her servant girls
the Sabbath by cleaning the shoes,
the morning of that day, when this
been done on the Saturday night,
two hours past midnight ere they
from the parlour,—we felt a momentary
lest our remarks should meet the eye
and give her offence.

The character of the Stone-breaker in 'The Il-
legitimate' interests the reader deeply from its ob-
vious relation to Mr. Bethune or his brother; but
the story does not excite the same feeling of nearness
to our every-day life as the one just commente

on; the scene seems always laid in some *terra incognita* over which hangs the dim haze of remoteness.

To a pensive reader, however, no part of the volume will be more interesting than that entitled 'Things and Thoughts,' inasmuch as it brings graphically to view an interesting episode in the author's own mental history. The prospect of having soon to remove from the room which he then occupied, to another part of the house, led him to examine some old lumber and half useless articles, with the view of committing, what might appear, mere rubbish to the flames. In the course of this examination he came upon several articles which had belonged to his brother; and the feeling of their being relics, rose so affectingly in his mind, that, though quite insignificant in themselves, he could not help preserving them. He then lighted on some old magazines, the sight of which awakened a train of most interesting associations, and brought back to his view the evening on which, along with several more valuable books, they were purchased, with all the vividness which had characterized the consciousness and perceptions of the actual occasion, deepened by all the affecting occurrences which had since intervened.

'The first of the magazines in question was for May 1830; and, though more than ten years of toil and care, with all their obliterating influences, had intervened, I had scarcely time to read the title

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page when imagina
succession of even
which they became
'As already said
our little library
last mentioned—it
ber—we got notice
was to take place in
tant. Fortunately,
about £2. It was ne
we had been able
cheap books and
us; and, as soon as
were washed, a has
we hied, happy we
things which we
return. These
work already ment
English Poets," in
tizen of the Wo
Works," four volu
and some other tri
portance. Some
what we most wa
not obtain, and so
than bring home
history of the trans
an account of the
my imagination.
cloudy and somew

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a slight breeze from the north, and a long streak of clear sky in the same quarter, indicating the approach of northern lights—a phenomenon which, for a number of years previous to 1830, so far as I recollect, was but rarely seen. Then the road, and the open country—with its scattered trees, hedges, cottages, and farms—and the distant hills, scarcely visible to to the straining eye, amid the shadows that rested on them, were exchanged for the long, narrow street of a rather populous village, slippery from recent rain, with figures gliding to and fro, or hurrying past in perfect obscurity, save when they glanced occasionally into view, for a few seconds, in the light of a shop window. Anon, there was a large hall, dimly lighted at the farther end, where a large collection of books had been placed upon temporary shelves; with a motley crowd of variously dressed and careless looking people sauntering through it, or resting on the seats along the wall. In the middle was the auctioneer, with a clerk at his side, and two candles burning before him—his eye evidently acquiring new lustre as it caught a glance of a supposed purchaser, while a broad grin of the most exalted satisfaction never failed to brighten up his whole countenance as often as any thing like a competition could be got up. But what interested me most was a young man—apparently older, but in reality under eighteen—with a thoughtful expression of countenance—hair which had gradually darkened as his years in-

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creased, till it was now almos'
plexion which was evidently I
been, from the combined effec
by day, late evening studies, a
who, though several years
than me by nearly the head.
intently the progress of the
permission to look over the
and finally, he requested tl
agreeable, to put up one o
he wished to purchase. I
granted; and then, with
character but ill suited t
ciety and the very humbl
destined to move, he ca
the price. Again the hall
eer, the candles, and tl
changed for the slipper
of the hour now comple
and the open country;
tances whom we pas
homeward way—the d
of the distant mount
which, rising from the
streamed up to the z
flame, making the pa
as if it had been but
ing;—the whole sce
as vividly as if it h

' As the conclud

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of the past, there were the musty walls and smoky rafters of a low, damp cottage, faintly illuminated by the flame of a rush-light, which burned in an iron lamp, suspended by a nail driven into the rustic frame-work which supported the clay vent, and which had been kindled with some difficulty from the embers of a nearly burnt out fire. Before that lamp sat the same young man, forgetful alike that he had to be abroad before six o'clock next morning, and that it was then considerably past midnight; so intent was he in scanning the contents of the books he had just purchased.

'This was the closing scene of that particular evening, from which, as already said, imagination had shaken off the shadows of more than ten years, But she did not stop here: many painful recollections were inseparably interwoven with the intervening period. These, at her command, were carefully collected by memory, and, when they had been invested with her most vivid colouring, placed exactly in the array in which the corresponding events had occurred. After having yielded implicitly for I know not how long to the various emotions thus produced, I put aside the things which I had been vainly endeavouring to examine, extinguished the lamp by which I had pursued these musings, and went to bed. As the consequence of previously excited feelings, a sort of imperfect and broken slumber soon came on; and then my dreams were of that brother, whom imagination had so recently

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placed before me in the various stages of his existence, from infancy up to manhood. If the impressions in the one case had been vivid, what may be called the perceptions in the other, seemed to partake of reality. Methought it was a bright Sabbath in the very pride of summer—that we had been engaged in the services of the day, and had strayed, during the interval of public worship to the ruins of the old church, and the parish burying ground which surrounded it—a favourite haunt of ours at such seasons. There, as fancy deemed, we were employed in deciphering the moss-covered inscriptions and half obliterated names, engraved on the rude monuments which had been "erected to the memory" of individuals long ago forgotten; when he started off all at once, and after running to a short distance, disappeared behind a tombstone, beckoning me to follow. I hastened to obey, but I had taken only a few steps when I stumbled over an open grave, which I had not before observed, and fell; and the fall, imaginary as it was, served to awaken me to a full sense of the cold and saddening realities by which I was surrounded—to a sense that that brother was no more!—that my few friends had sunk, in rapid succession, into their graves! and that I was alone in the world—the sole, and solitary inhabitant of a home which had once contained a whole family, of whom, myself excepted, not a single individual was now alive!'

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CHAPTER X.

EERFUL PROSPECTS—IS SEIZED WITH FEVER—
SS AND DEATH OF ONE OF HIS AUNTS—PARTIAL
LESCENCE—ACCEPTS, CONDITIONALLY, THE SIT-
ON OF EDITOR OF THE 'DUMFRIES STANDARD'—
'S KENNOWAY FOR CHANGE OF AIR—DISEASE MER-
INTO CONSUMPTION—RESIGNS EDITORSHIP—COR-
PONDENCE WITH ENGLISH FRIENDS—INCREASED
NESS—DEATH—BURIAL—MONUMENT—CONCLUSION.

ILL near the end of November, 1842, Mr. Be-
ne continued to enjoy comparatively good health,
considerably recruited spirits. His friends
re gratified by perceiving a more cheerful tone
mind pervading his communications than for-
erly—as for example:—'My prospects on the
pproach of winter are not at all disheartening.
n the course of a month, or so, I may perhaps be
ut of work for a time; but then I still have a
number of my brother's papers to transcribe, and
with these I can keep myself busy till something
else comes in the way.'—But about the 29th of
November, he was seized with fever; having, as it
appears, caught the infection from the family which
supplied him with milk. Of his illness, and those

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unhappy attendant circumstances which ind
transition into that fatal malady which term
his life—I have received the following a
from his medical attendant, Dr. John LY
It was an attack of fever, but rather of a
description than otherwise. One of his nurse
maiden aunts, who had come to be his in
became affected with the disease, and in a
form—in fact, she was ultimately cut off
plorable state from bed-sore. While Alexa
got convalescent, his aunt was at her worst;
by her restlessness, delirium, &c., prevented
from obtaining the quiet and rest necessary for
recovery; and at that particular time when
and sleep were especially requisite for his welfa
On this account, he never made a thorough
very—sleep went from him—his appetite did
return, and a slight cough began to annoy
in short, there was a gradual transition into
monary consumption. It was during this interval
that a gentleman* who knew his penurious habits,
and was afraid lest any thing should be awanting
in promoting his recovery—transmitted to me one
pound to purchase wine for him, and medicate
with a little bark, or some such article, so that
might not appear an offering of charity. This good
deed was done by stealth—for the donor's name
was kept a secret between himself and me.'

* The late John Ouchterlony, Esq. of the Guynd, a gentleman who had shown great zeal and activity in promoting the sale of Mr. Bethune's works.

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During the period of his partial convalescence, an offer was made to him by the projectors of a newspaper then about to be started in the Non-intrusion interest in Dumfries—of the situation of principal editor—he having been recommended by Hugh Miller. To this application he expressed himself inclined to have acceded, had the state of his health permitted; and the proprietors being anxious to secure his services, an arrangement was entered into conditionally—should his health so far improve as to warrant his entering on the duties of the situation within a specified period. His salary was to have been £100 a-year—a scale of remuneration which, though far from large for an editor, would have appeared almost princely to his humble ambition, and as compared with his former earnings and most economical habits. Then, for the first time during a life of drudgery, disappointment, and privation, there dawned on him the prospect of reaching a position in society somewhat more worthy of his genius and acquirements, than that which he had hitherto occupied. But, alas! it was never more than a prospect. He had removed to Kennoway, a village about sixteen miles south from Newburgh, for change of air, but derived no advantage from it; and from this place he wrote one of the projectors of the 'Dumfries Standard'—resigning the last hope of being able to enter on the duties of editor of that paper. Though he had so far recovered as to be able to

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enter on these duties, it may be doubted whether he would have found them very congenial to his temper of mind. He was no doubt conscientiously attached to the cause of what has now become the Free Church; but his attachment partook little of the heat of partizanship—a quality which, under the present prevalent mode of conducting the newspaper press, is, unhappily, a principal element of interest and success. Had he, notwithstanding this, succeeded, we should have expected one important service from him, namely—an example of improved temper in newspaper writing; for it would have indeed surprised us, had we found him, for any consideration, like some others of his class—

'Narrow his mind,
And to party give up what was meant for mankind.'

Several of his English friends, who had become aware of his illness, manifested deep concern and sympathy with him, and were anxious to devise means for promoting his recovery. Rendered unable to do anything for his own support, and with but faint prospects of speedy restoration, he now, in one or two instances, so far relaxed the rigour of his independence, as to permit himself to receive a small sum or two, proffered and pressed on his acceptance with peculiar delicacy, by highly valued friends; yet not without the proviso that he would either repay the money, or devote it to the

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relief of others, should he ever be able to resume labour. I insert the following note from one of the ladies belonging to the Society of Friends, as a remarkable instance of such delicacy, as well as of the deep interest taken by the writer in Mr. Bethune's welfare. Having employed an amanuensis in the business part of her letter, which related to some of Mr. Bethune's publications, in promoting the circulation of which she still zealously employed herself—she adds in her own hand :—

'My Dear Friend,—I must add a few lines just between ourselves,—As during thy late protracted illness, much expense must necessarily have been incurred, I am inclined once more to solicit thy acceptance of a few pounds, which it will be a great pleasure to me to send. Thou knowest me better now than at a former time, and I am in hopes wilt shew that thou hast "respect enough" for me to accept my money. If that privilege be granted me, I will send a Post-Office order immediately, but cannot risk its being returned ; as that from a friend would be too mortifying to thy sincere and sympathising friend.'

The following are extracts from Mr. Bethune's reply :—

'MOUNTPLEASANT, by NEWBURGH,
February 15, 1843.

'My Dear and much respected friend,—How shall

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I thank you for that un
have done so little to de
press myself readily en
here I can find no words
experience a feeling of w
to others. I am now h
will send me a Post-Of
not more. Yes; let me
well deserves every feel
which any heart can e
never need it for myself
among the most deservi
lect. Though the All-w
meet to visit me with a
provided the means of
without knowing what
any comfort which money
myself, I have much for
little of which to compl
'I do not recollect if
case of my aunt * *
8th of the present mont
as it did, has been to me
and sorrow. It was my
that she might recover, a
as she had come; but t
otherwise, and this it seem
of her journey. Nor to
when or where the call ca
her life had been spent i
y

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might give her strength, to make a suitable preparation for death, that she might appear with joy, and not with sorrow, before the Judge of all the earth.—Your very humble friend and servant,

A. B.'

Among those who at this time manifested a deep and most anxious solicitude in regard to Mr. Bethune were several gentlemen belonging to the medical profession in Bristol, to one of whom (the one who generally conducted the correspondence) we had occasion to refer in an early part of this narrative. These gentlemen not only proffered to Mr. Bethune pecuniary supplies, and tendered him professional advice, but communicated with some of his friends in Scotland, in order, if possible, more effectually to secure to him the benefit of their benevolent intentions; and even, as the reader will see from a letter he will find below, volunteered the assumption of the entire responsibility of his removing for a time to some place enjoying a more equable and warmer climate.* The following extracts from a letter of Mr. Bethune's, in reply to one covering a remittance from these friends, imbodies some particulars of most painful interest, respecting his own and aunt's illness:—

* The Isle of Bute was thought of; but Mr. Bethune's increasing weakness seems to have rendered inadvisable his removal to such a distance.

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'*Though I have occasionally returned some* '*March* 15, I s
benefactions before, from a conviction that upon
not deserve them, and had no right to live beside
benevolence of others, yet I will keep this it free
and, if it can be at all useful to me, use me
but, should it please Providence to restore me
health, and place me in easy circumstances, or if
should be called hence before my own resources a
exhausted,—in either case, I hope you will have n
objection to its being restored.

'*It was not over-exertion which injured my*
health. Ever since my mother's death, which happened on the 21st December, 1840, I had been careful of it—careful to avoid every thing which I supposed would lessen it; and, but for the fever and subsequent events, it seemed probable that my constitution might have improved. From the fever itself I believe I should have recovered within the ordinary time: but my aunt had come here on my being taken ill; she was with me only a short time when she caught the infection herself; the disease almost immediately affected her brain, and during the nine following weeks, at the end of which she died, I do not think that she was silent as long as would have made three days altogether. She scarcely ever slept herself, and it was quite impossible to sleep in the house beside her. I was thus entirely deprived of rest for a long period, at the time when I should have been recovering. This, together wit

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xiety inseparable from such a state of things, severe cold caught during those seasons of watching, which, unfit as I was for the last, my share, have left me with a cough, a quick and a degree of general weakness which the ve weeks have done very little to remove. atever may be the termination, there is thus consolation in thinking that my present ill has not been brought on by my own impru- and, while I shall do every thing in my for my restoration, I would at the same time to be resigned to whatever may be the will l concerning me. I have still a number of s for wishing my life prolonged for a few In a few days, if the weather be favourable, go about sixteen miles to the southward for ge of air. For, since the 29th of November have not attempted work of any kind; and ent, it is as much as I can do to walk about iles or so in a day, for exercise. The hour for ng out is just arrived, and I would now beg to le by simply saying that, with many thanks, e greatest respect, I am, Sir, Your much in- very humble servant, A. B.'

following is the answer of his medical cor- lent, which I cannot refrain from inserting as much for the high sense of what was due Bethune's character and worth which per- t, as for the generous and even munificent ence which it evinces:—

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'*March* 21, 1843.

'My dear Sir,—I cannot deny that the receipt of your acknowledgement of our enclosure, though earlier than what we should have judged an advisable exercise of your writing, was very gratifying to us. By the cordiality with which we cherish the thought that we can in anywise minister to your comfort you may guess of the regret it would give us if we did not, in the most unreserved manner, put to you whatever use could most benefit you the trifle offered. So long as any 'Bethune' could be advantaged, or their memory honoured by it, not a fraction could return welcome to us.

'I regret to perceive in what language you are obliged to depict your present symptoms: they alone prove that our donation can form but an inconsiderable part of what your expense should be. As a physician, I should say the measures you are pursuing are in themselves good; but, from the same cause, I must claim your pardon for giving a further opinion, that a judgment of your case, as directing to either what plan might be devised with well-grounded prospect of your own recovery, or a greater degree of certainty to your own prognosis should be founded on a careful examination by the stethoscope, and the treatment be arranged accordingly. If the provinces afford you such an authority, well; if not, the expense of your repairing Edinburgh for it we should most cheerfully and beg you to resort to. All such further

as you have, prior to the fever, been pursuing, I hope you will banish the thought of—for ever, it might be said, but at any rate, for an indefinite period. If the situation sixteen miles from you do not answer the intended purpose, and you can learn from any quarter of a milder and more suitable, give your English friends the credit to believe that they will gladly take on them the responsibility of its demand on your finances. Knowing what is required to defray travelling expenses, proper medical advice, nourishing articles (whether of animal food, or wine), and attendance, such as you *should* have, it would pain them more than you are aware, if you, out of scruple, forewent any of these things; for which, your own present fund they request you (however laudable in preferring to look to that first) to regard only as a *primary* competence.

'Do not reply immediately, unless you see necessity; but if, after a few weeks, God graciously crown our wishes with improved health to you, a line or two to that effect will truly gratify Yours truly in esteem,

———.'

After his return from Kennoway, Mr. Bethune became gradually weaker. From that time he seems to have ceased to attempt writing, as the latest of his letters, with the exception of the fragment to myself given in the preface, are dated from that place. And indeed we find him taking leave of one of his most valued friends, in a note dated

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from that place, of which the following extract :—

'KENNOWAY, FIFE, *April 1, 1*

'My Dear and much respected Friend
warmest gratitude to —— for her good wi
though in so far as this world is concerned
is but little prospect of their being realized.
my present complaints terminate unfavourab
will be among the few friends at a distance w
be apprised of the event; and if it should
Providence again to restore me, though m
hopes of such a result are now fading in th
tance, I will myself communicate the intell
—With the greatest respect, I am Your mu
debted, very humble friend and servant,

A

By this time I had got very anxious abo
Bethune. I had written him in January and l
no answer. I wrote again in May: several
afterwards I received the note containing th
ful intelligence of his illness, and expressi
wish to see me. I hastened away immediate
ing that there was no time to lose. On
at Mountpleasant, I found our friend in a ve
state. It was evident his end was near.
quite sensible of his situation, yet felt, like a
affected with it, the peculiar deceptiveness
disease: 'How difficult is it' said he, 'to
a man that he is dying when he feels no pa

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several days previous to my arrival the disease had begun to affect his mind occasionally, and it continued to do so. For a short time he would converse quite distinctly and with all his wonted correctness and propriety of expression, and then his mind would begin to wander. His surviving aunt and Mrs. Ferguson attended him with the greatest solicitude and tenderness, doing every thing in their power to minister to the wants of decaying nature and smoothe his dying pillow. He differed in temperament from his brother John, in respect that he was not very ready to give utterance to his religious feelings. But to the inquiry whether he enjoyed comfort in the prospect of another state of being, he replied, 'that his mind was quite at rest on that subject.' When taking my leave, I expressed a hope that through redeeming mercy we should meet in another and happier world. In this hope he intimated his concurrence, and added, 'Seeing it is so, why should we part melancholy?—let us part joyfully.' I left him on the Monday afternoon; and he gradually became weaker, until his spirit took its departure about midnight of the following day, being Tuesday, the 13th of June. The funeral took place on the Saturday following. It had been his wish that his body should rest in his brother's grave: and this wish it was intended to carry into effect, but by some culpable inattention of the grave-digger, his friends on arriving at the church-yard found that another grave had been opened; into that his

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body was put, but so dissatisfied was his aun
she did not rest until she had it disinterred,
put, according to his desire, into his brother's gra
—'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives,' a
their resting-place is in the dust together.
On the north side of the monument erected
him to his brother, which is a square pillar abo
seven feet high, with a cornice surmounted by
vase, has been put the following inscription :—

IN THE SAME GRAVE
WITH JOHN, REST THE REMAINS OF
HIS BROTHER,
ALEXANDER BETHUNE,
THE LAST MEMBER OF A WORTHY FAMILY,
WHO DIED, JUNE 13th, 1843,
AGED 38.

WITH SCARCELY ANY SCHOOL EDUCATION, AND
AND UNDER THE PRESSURE OF POVERTY AND
THE SEVEREST TOIL, HE PRODUCED SEVERAL
WORKS OF MUCH MERIT, ILLUSTRATIVE OF TH
CHARACTER AND MANNERS, AND CONDUCIVE TO T
IMPROVEMENT, OF HIS OWN CLASS OF SOCIETY
AND WAS AS REMARKABLE FOR HIS INDEPEN
DENCE OF SPIRIT AND PRIVATE VIRTUES, A
FOR HIS LITERARY ATTAINMENTS.

By Mr. Bethune's will, his aunt has the ass
house and garden, with furniture, during her li
The money referred to above as forwarded t

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glish friends,' and lodged in the bank, *he left to be* disposed of according to Mr. Dalgleish's *discretion,* who has, I understand, appropriated it *to the use of* the same deserving relative;—little *more than an* act of justice, as she had from her own *limited funds* paid a large proportion of the expenses *incurred* during her nephew's illness.

The reader will already have a more *distinct* conception of Alexander Bethune's personal appearance (*ante*, pp. 67—69, and 161, 162 in particular) than, by any description of mine, I could have hoped to have given him. His countenance wore the expression of serene benignity, and was all the more interesting from the many traces (they were not disfiguring ones) of physical disaster which it bore. It is much to be regretted that no portrait of him was ever taken: but the regret is now unavailing.

As in the preceding pages it has been meant to exhibit Alexander Bethune's character, quite as much as to relate his history, I am satisfied the intelligent reader would regard any formal attempt at portraying *that*, not only as superfluous, but impertinent.

The history of Alexander Bethune, and that of his brother, cannot but be fraught with a special interest to that large and increasing class of young men, who, while they have to toil for their daily bread, are striving to educate themselves; some of them with the yet further aim of being distinguished not only for their acquirements, but for their pro-

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ductions likewise. To those who are thus honour
ably impelled and occupied, the story of the Bethune
affords special instruction and encouragement. Firs
—from the sound and healthy tone of mind in regar
to the concerns of every-day life which they exh
bited. You see they never made their consciousne
of superior powers of mind an excuse for neglecti
any relative or social duty—they never talked
felt as if genius was too lofty a thing to be beset
the ordinary toils and cares of humanity. Th
their indomitable perseverance should furnish
with a high stimulus and encouragement. Fe
you, probably, will have to hold a long combat
circumstances so adverse as they had. Yet,
disappointments and disasters, in unpatronized
security, they held on, till they emerged befor
world as writers and teachers worthy to be h
Yet though thus honourably successful, they p
how inadequate, unless in a few lucky instanc
the rewards of literature; and what a broken
it were for any one to lean to who can lab
his support. Measured by its pecuniary
their success was poor indeed. But there are
elements and criterions:—The mental disci
the range and precision of thought—the mo
vation, induced by such a career and such
ments as theirs,—these are the noblest resul
they are independent of the world's opin

* Preface to 'The Scottish Peasant's Firesid

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the world's favour. Success of this kind is open to all, and it is enduring. It will bless him who has achieved it, in a region where the loudest trump of mere literary fame is not heard. Though it may be amid ungenial circumstances, and through frequent disappointments, then tug and grind on. Your worth may not be appreciated; you may meet only with indifference or with scorn. Be not discouraged. Not only are you securing immense individual benefits—you are exerting an influence—though it may be unperceived by you—which will not be lost—an influence, the pulsations of which will be felt, extending and deepening, ages after your name is forgotten. Remember that spiritual and moral excellence is the first object, and that if steadily pursued, honour will follow—if not in this world, yet certainly in the next.

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APPENDIX.

NO. I.

EXTRACTS FROM 'NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF ALISON CHRISTIE, RELICT OF ALEXANDER BETHUNE, FROM THE TIME OF HER LEAVING LOCHEND, TILL HER DEATH, DEC. 21, 1840.'

AFTER describing the very great reluctance with which the subject of the narrative left Lochend, and the sorrow occasioned by the death of her husband, which took place within two or three months after the removal of the family to Mountpleasant, the writer proceeds:—

'In the month of November following, (1838) her two sons had some expectations of being able to support themselves and her by writing; and to her this circumstance gave unmingled satisfaction. She had often lamented what she considered the stern necessity by which they were exposed to the rains and storms of winter; and the idea of having them always at home, and of their being thus kept warm and comfortable, was to her particularly gratifying. A breach had been made in her family, but the objects of her maternal pride were still around her, and in her affection for them, and the interest which she took in their concerns, her heart appeared in some measure to have closed over the wound occasioned by the death of her husband. Throughout the winter she was again busy with her wheel, and during

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those short intervals of relaxation which she allowed herself, she was even cheerful. But as spring, which was the season at which death had last visited the family, again drew near, an almost unaccountable foreboding crept over her spirit; and, as she afterwards stated, the words "*There is more behind!*" seemed as if they had been ringing in her ears. At least the impression was such, that whenever she was left alone the thought always occurred. This she took, or rather mistook, for a presentiment of her own approaching dissolution: yet there were seasons when she seemed to have some misgivings as to its applicability in this way. But to those attempts which her sons made to convince her of the folly of yielding to such impressions, and the propriety of endeavouring to forget them, her uniform answer was, "That she did not wish to forget it, for it had driven her to be more frequent in prayer, and more earnest in begging strength from God to bear whatever trials might be before her."

* * * * * * *

'A severer trial than any which she had hitherto experienced was now approaching. Early in June, her son's illness began to assume a threatening appearance; and though she continued to toil on at her wonted employment with unremitting diligence, that she might neutralize as much as possible her own expenses at a season when the other resources of the family were almost entirely cut off, she all along complained of an inexpressible weight upon her spirits, which was often accompanied by a degree of pain about the region of the heart. Afterwards, when the fatal nature of his complaint had become more manifest, and the dark and hopeless certainty of his approaching fate seemed to close in on every

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side, she said frequently, "that it would be no wonder to herself if the indescribable weight which was upon her spirits should bring her to the grave before him!" Such feelings, it may easily be conceived, were carefully concealed from the sufferer; but this did not lessen their poignancy. Still, to use her own words, "she was earnest in prayer, that the evil day might either be averted, or that those who were to be called hence might be prepared for that solemn event and those who were to be left behind strengthened to bear the pang of separation." On the 1st of September, 1839, her son died, at the early age of twenty-seven; and this was the crowning wreath of her misfortunes. She strove to be resigned to the will of Providence; and said "that she had great reason to be thankful for the strict integrity of his life, and the hope which he had evinced at death—that he was a blessing which God had lent her for a season—and that what God had given he certainly had a right to take back." Sometimes too she would address her own heart in the language of scripture: "Be still and know that I am God!" In this manner she used to commune with herself and to converse with her friends; but still the yearnings of a mother's heart would not be repressed.

'The affliction of a mother for a son is proverbially strong; but in her case a number of circumstances had contributed to strengthen it. Unlike most young men, he had never left the house, nor had he ever been out of her sight for two days at a time, except during the short interval when he was learning the weaver business; in addition to the ordinary ties of such a relationship, she had cared for and watched over him throughout the whole period of youth and early manhood; and when years and increasing infirmities partly unfitted her for the task, he

had returned her care and her affection, by providing for, and endeavouring to watch over her. When the humble station in which he was born and bred, and his total want of what is commonly called education, were taken into account, he was, moreover, a highly promising character. After a series of years passed in the severest drudgery and the most profound obscurity, during which he had been silently and assiduously endeavouring to cultivate his mental faculties, he had at last forced his way into notice; and it seemed that only a very few years more would have been necessary to enable him to establish his reputation in a literary point of view. In all this there was much for maternal feeling to feed upon and rejoice over; for who is so ready to appreciate the triumphs of a son, as the mother to whom he owes his existence? The links which bound her to him were thus doubly strong—admiration, esteem, and gratitude were twisted around maternal love;—and who can wonder if the bursting of such a chain should produce all but a universal wreck?

'His death did, accordingly, have an indelible impression upon her heart; a complete change seemed to have passed over her, and she never was like her former self again. After this event she was rarely seen to smile; and if, in the forgetfulness of the moment, her features did at any time relax, it was almost always followed by a heavy sigh, and a deeper shade of solemnity in her countenance and manner. "My dear John! my dear John!" she would sometimes exclaim, after a long season of silent musing; "how I could cry out in the greatest bitterness of spirit, if it would bring him back! But he is gone for ever from his home, and from the mother who would have gladly bought his life with her own." At other

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times she would try to soothe her wounded feelin
endeavouring to contemplate the happiness whic
spirit was enjoying. "It is vain and sinful," she
say at such seasons, "thus to mourn over him
crowns, and kingdoms, and the richest prizes which
can afford would not tempt him back to this vale of
and why should I repine at his happiness, or mourn
a separation which, at the longest, can be but for
days? What is loss to me is to him unspeakable
Occasionally, too, she was heard to say: "I have
endeavouring to sum up my mercies, and to thank
for their vast amount. The good Halyburton said
ago, 'that he had a father, a mother, and ten bre
and sisters in heaven, and he would soon be the elev
and I, in like manner may say, I have a father, a m
a husband, and two sons, which make five, in h
and I shall shortly be the sixth! Why should I co
though I am separated from them for a few days?

'Her efforts to comfort her only remaining s
writer of this narrative, were more touching tha
her own sorrows. On these occasions she sor
tried to draw a comparison between the supposed
of an earthly potentate, and the decrees of Prov
"If some great king," she would observe, "had
him away to place him in a situation near his own
—a situation in which riches, honour, and every
enjoyment would have been his portion, then you
have rejoiced at the change; and why should you
when he is called away from the disappointme
toils, the weariness, and the pains of earth, to
the person of the King of kings, and to enjoy
speakable happiness of heaven—a happiness to w
earthly enjoyments are but as a drop to the

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While she spoke thus, the tears which flowed fast down her own aged cheeks told too plainly that she was offering to another the cup of consolation which she could not take to herself. The christian strove to be resigned, but nature asserted her reign, and the woman and the mother was forced to mourn.

'As might have been expected from the tenor of her fortune and the desolating strokes with which she had been visited, at times she was inclined to take gloomy views of the present state. "I have been looking through the world," she said several times, "and endeavouring to sift it that I might see what was in it; and now I must confess, in the language of the prophet, that it is at best but 'a Bochim—a place of weepers!"'

'As the props of the house, one by one, gave way, and sunk around her, she seemed to lean the more confidingly on that which remained. Of her whole family but one son was now alive, and upon him that affection which had once been divided among the rest of its members was now concentrated. During the early part of the winter, being engaged in copying and revising my brother's papers, and preparing a sketch of his life for the press, I often continued writing till a late hour; but through the whole of these vigils she kept me company, and never once could be prevailed upon to go to rest till she had seen me in bed. Her reasons for doing so were, that she might be ready to *beet* the fire when it became low, lest I should suffer from cold, and to see that I did not prolong those studies so as to injure my health. In vain did I assure her that I could keep a good fire for myself, and name the hour at which I would retire to rest: nothing could persuade her to leave me.

'When I had gone to bed, and her little household

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duties were finished, she would come to my bed-s
see that I was comfortable;—and I think I can s
still as she stood before me—her aged form bending
forward—with the lamp in one hand, and leanin
her staff with the other. Late as the hour often
always appeared loath to retire herself to rest, and
dom did so without some attempt to comfort or j
On these occasions she would recount the anxious
with which her mind had been perplexed, and
lest my constitution should give way under the ta
I had imposed upon myself. "Recollect," s
say, "that though your father and brother are
have still your poor, aged, and infirm mothe
after, and for my sake, if not for your own, sp
self as much as possible; and do not be too anx
the little debts which were contracted on our
account. God will yet enable you to pay the
ably, and in good time. And oh! whatever
whatever you leave undone, do not forget to s
and His strength continually; for without
do nothing. From the frailties and sorrow
now weighing me down, I cannot be lang
of this earth; and I may not be able to spe
death, but what I say now is what I wou
dying moment, if the power of utterance
It may be here noticed, that she mentioned fi
in a number of different ways, the possibil
being able to speak at death. The circum
to be impressed upon her imagination; an
coincidence, the event against which she
to provide actually happened.

'In the course of these parting con
sometimes alluded, in the most touching

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own weakness. After noticing the labours which she had been able to perform in her better days—"I have lang been an incumbrance upon you," she would continue, "and now I am a greater incumbrance than ever; yet I am sometimes afraid lest I should be ta'en awa' at a time when ye may be ill able to bear the expenses of my funeral; and thus, though I am but as one of Job's comforters, I could e'en like to linger on beside you for a season, like a withered leaf clinging to a tree after the whole of its fellows have been swept away by the wintry storm." Though she was previously well assured, that the individual whom she addressed was very far from considering her "an incumbrance," and that he would have willingly made any sacrifice to increase her comfort, or prolong her existence—it always seemed to give her a degree of satisfaction to hear that assurance repeated; and thus she sometimes gave the conversation a turn such as that just noticed. More frequently, however, her discourse was directed to the things of another world, and the importance of endeavouring to provide a better inheritance than the perishing things of time. So earnest was she in inculcating these matters, that I was frequently compelled to remonstrate on the necessity of her retiring to give her wearied body and wo-worn spirits their wonted repose, before she would go to bed. "I maun e'en leave you, then," was almost always her parting salutation—"but may the Lord give you the sleep of his beloved; and when you awake, may you be satisfied with his likeness."

"Let me here pause, to pay a tribute of grateful remembrance to her memory. However far I may go astray, I have had at least the advantage of the example and the instructions of a pious mother—of one who,

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with some frailties and imperfections, such as flesh is heir to, was certainly a christian, if there is one on earth. So diligently had she read, and so well was she acquainted with her bible, that it was almost impossible to mention a single text or passage, in any part of the sacred volume, which she could not turn up upon the shortest notice. She did not, indeed, recollect chapter and verse, but the tenor of the whole of the inspired writings was imprinted upon her memory; and from the nature and import of the subject mentioned, she always knew within a little of the place where it might be found. So well was this known to both my brother and myself, that if at any time we had occasion to quote a few words from scripture, and did not happen to know the exact reference, it was uniformly our custom to inquire at her, and, in general, she was able to give us the necessary information in a few minutes.

* * * * * * * * *

'A large bible, which had been left her by her mother, was almost her constant companion; and when not employed with it, she might have been seen walking slowly through the garden with her staff, or leaning upon this support and extracting the most luxuriant weeds from a small plot of onions, in the culture and growth of which she still continued to take an interest. From the beneficial effect which they produced upon a peculiarly constituted; or rather a diseased stomach, onions, for a number of years, had been a favourite article of diet with her deceased son; as such, she had been particularly careful to keep them free from weeds while growing, and to do everything in her power to ensure a luxuriant crop, at her former dwelling; and thus, though he was gone, and the motive no longer

existed, the habit which had been formed still continued to manifest itself. When not employed in one or other of these ways, she might have been found in a retired situation, where she considered herself safe from the prying eye of strangers—upon her knees; and, as the season advanced, this exercise became with her more and more frequent.

* * * * * * * * * *

'Previous to this time, her deceased son's Poems were in the press. She had often expressed her regret at the delays of the printer; and she now began to manifest a more than ordinary degree of anxiety for their appearance, and frequently requested me to urge him on with the work—assigning as her reason for doing so, that she wished "to have the satisfaction of reading her dear John's Poems in print, before she left the world." Whenever any of the proofs arrived, she had always her spectacles in readiness, and was waiting eagerly to read them the moment I had done making the necessary corrections. While thus engaged, her tears frequently manifested the feelings with which she perused the effusions of her departed son; and in this way, with the exception of the concluding half-sheet, she did read the whole of the work in print; but before it made its appearance in a connected form, her sight and other faculties were so much deranged by the disease of which she died, that her reading was for ever at an end.'

The rest of the Narrative is occupied chiefly with details respecting the progress of the disease of which she died, (paralysis,) and the devices which filial affection prompted for its alleviation.

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NO. II.

'LOVE IN A BARREL.'

'SCONCED in the corner of a park,
Whose shady trees make noonday dark,
Whare scarce a beam has room to twinkle,
Stands the abode o' Sarah Wrinkle;
A modest domicile I ween
As e'er in Scotia's isle was seen.
'Secluded there from love and strife,
Sarah hath lived a serious life—
And still she lives (let none upbraid)
A venerable vestal maid;
Within whose heart Love never ventured,
But once—and cursed the day he entered.
* * * * *
'Know then, she is a moving steeple,
And far o'ertops the neighbouring people—
A perfect giantess—but slim
As you could wish in bust and limb.
* * then for her features—
She seems the best of mortal creatures:
Her eyes are dark, and o'er her nose
Superbly rise her arched brows,
Retiring far, while twinkling under
The fiery orbs seem full of wonder;
Her cheeks are lean, of iron hue,
But striped and streaked with red and blue;
Her nose is long, and hooked, and pointed,
And glows as if by oil anointed.
* * * *
'Next, with your leave, her mental graces
Shall figure in their proper places.

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Blest with a mind of quick discerning,
And stored with much recondite learning,
* * * *
Her glance is critical and tasty,
In judging puddings, pies, and pasty;
And even the slightest impropriety,
Draws down her censure on society.
Skilled in decorum, she is able
To point each person's place at table.
* * *
She can propound with zeal most fervent
The duties of a female servant,
And with unrivalled skill can handle
A serious text on country scandal:
You'd think her an inspirëd teacher,
And swear she might become a preacher.
She loves the church, but chiefly twines
Her laurels for the old divines,
Because, she says, in their discourses
The truth is drawn from purer sources
Than human pride and human knowledge,
Those idols of the modern college.
'She has a taste for cats and birds,
And loves the creatures' simplest words,
And into English verse can render
Their curious converse, sweet and tender.
She warmly hates all romping boys,
Who stun the studious with their noise,
And gives good hints to those who keep them
On the necessity to whip them.
She quite abhors all rural meetings,
And rustic junketings and greetings;
And reprimands with due severity
The timid maids for their temerity.
Even her white lips will writhe and redden
In wrath upon a penny weddin'.

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But it would take a folio ponderous
To set forth all her virtues wondrous:
These are but an inferior sample
Of Sarah's graces rich and ample.
* * * *
* * Her female servant.
*
Deborah is a different creature
From Sarah, both in form and feature:
Her face is full, and round, and ruddy,
And then, Heaven bless her! what a body!—
'Tis a substantial mass of matter
As e'er came from the hand o' Nature;
And though apart from my intentions
To sketch you out her full dimensions,
Yet I shall briefly try to show her,
That when you meet her you may know her.
'Unlike those fashionable misses
* * * *
Whose swelling breasts and slender middle
Must still remind you of a fiddle,
Deborah has a goodly back,
Even thicker than a barley sack,
And her high shoulders, round and broad,
Might bear a horse or horse's load;
Her massy arms are plump and yellow,
Sun-burned, and soft as any pillow,
Though there, alas, Love never laid
His sunny cheek and curly head;
Her neck and chin, as next in order,
Claim notice from the just recorder.
The first, though short, contains, at least,
Materials for a moderate waist;
The second is the most uncommon
Appendage to a common woman.
Would I could show you but a section
Of such a manifold projection,

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With all its burly butments swelling,
Like barbican in ancient dwelling!
I fain would paint it, but despair
Of painting justly, and forbear.
Around her mouth, but late appeared,
Blest symptoms of a glorious beard.
* * * *
I'll not expatiate on her nose,
Nor dwell upon her cheeks or brows,
But simply say, that when contrasted
With Sarah's, none would think she fasted;
For while the lady's cheeks are thin,
Deborah's almost burst the skin.
And then, for Sarah's meagre pimples,
Deborah has her buxom dimples.

'Such is a picture of the pair
Of ancient virgins good and fair,
Who long have lived in close connexion,—
Though not from mutual affection,
But that they knew each others failings,
And better bore their mutual railings.
'Sarah, as I have said above,
Had ne'er but once been given to love;
And as she could not find a mate,
Her passion settled into hate;
But every day that fleeted over,
Deborah was a constant lover.
* * * * * *
Did no poor wight or wanderer orra,
Return the love of good Deborah?
O yes! she had a host of suitors
Who would have waded through the gutters
To visit her by night or day;
But Sarah scared them all away—

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For Oh! the frowns of Mrs. Sarah
Were worse than all the plagues of Pharaoh.
* * * * *
But tho' Deborah's charms were wasting,
And tho' her marrying days were hasting;
Yet while her rosy cheeks were withering,
Her hoarded wealth was yearly gathering,
And faded forty blest with plenty,
Is better far than dowerless twenty;
And thus Deborah's charms renewed,
Made her more worthy to be wooed.
But still the suitors kept their distance,
Deterred by Sarah's fierce resistance:
Until at length a lucky quarrel
Made love a lodger in the barrel.
'Alas! that it should be recorded—
Good Sarah and her maid discorded,
And as Deborah thought, (tho' blindly,)
Her mistress treated her unkindly.
She swore with fearful resolution,
That there should be a retribution;
And well she knew if she could catch
Some moidered wretch to make a match,
Sarah would die of perfect spite
Upon her merry marriage night.
And luckily before a week
Elapsed, she met with Andrew Breek.
Now Andrew was a man of valour,
And both an elder and a tailor,
And by the powers of his profession
Had ruled the members of the Session;
And Andrew even in his devotion,
Had long been haunted with a notion
To wed for better or for worse
A woman who possessed a purse.

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And he was marvellously delighted
When good Deborah him invited
(With a most gracious smirk and leer,)
To "Come some e'ening o'er an' see her."
Andrew went home so light with love,
He scarcely felt his body move;
And he that night was so enamoured
That all his senses seemed beglamoured,
And awkward cuts and crooked seams
Attested his romantic dreams;
For he attached with active stitches
A coat sleeve to a pair of breeches.
And drab, and cassimere, and kersey
Were mingled without care or mercy,
Till Andrew fixed upon to-morrow
For his first visit to Deborah,
And ere the hour of assignation,
He bore his love with great discretion.

'The morning dawned—the mid day passed—
The longed for evening came at last.

* * * * *

'He reached Deborah's blest abode
Just as her mistress walked abroad,
And he was previously instructed
How matters were to be conducted—
And watched awhile his opportunity,
Then boldly entered with impunity,
And in an instant more, the stranger
Was garreted, and out of danger.
Deborah, like a practised jailor,
At once secured the amorous tailor;
And then the pair with souls sedate
Held their delightful tete-a-tete,
Until at length a thunder shower
Made gentle Sarah seek her bower;

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And soon, alas! in deep despair,
They heard her footsteps on the stair:
What could be done? the door was locked,
But must be ope'd when Sarah knocked,
And then the mistress must discover
The maiden and her luckless lover.
'Deborah strained her powers inventive
For remedy or for preventive:—
And what dilemma e'er was laid in
Too hard for an ingenious maiden?
A cask is fixed on Sarah's wall
To catch the rain-drops as they fall
From off the roof, and downward trunnel
To fill it, in a leaden tunnel;
And soon Deborah's blest invention,
Contrived a passage of suspension
Between the window and the barrel,
Upon whose top the amorous carle
Might free from danger rest a space,
Or leap to earth without disgrace,
'Some trifle Sarah's steps delayed
Till the proposed descent was made;
But sadly was the precious water
Polluted by that vile avatar—
For the dread cask's unfaithful cover
Gave way beneath the faithful lover!
There was a splash—and then a gushing—
A sound of many waters rushing;
It reached the attic of the maid—
And Sarah on the stairs was staid,
While her poor niece in sad condition
Came with a terrible petition—
"Oh auntie, auntie! come to me,
The kitchen 's sailing in a sea—
The cat upon the hearth is drowning,
The very dogs for fear are running!"

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"Sarah descended like a falcon
To save her favourite old grimalkin;
But Guess how flashed her fiery eyes,
Starting with terror and surprise—
When foaming fiercely through the entry
To kitchen, closet, press and pantry—
She saw an inundation dreadful
Which would have made an Arkwright needful;
A flood (with reverence be it spoke)
To which good Noah's was a joke!

* * * *

Yet boldly waded to the door,
To learn the cause of such uproar.
'There was a splash, a groan, a snarl—
The devil was drowning in the barrel!

* * * *

The cask sent forth a mighty river,
Which roared as it would run for ever.
But Sarah prayed that it might cease,
And thus addressed her trembling niece:—
"Run lassie! run for doctor Dover!
And say I beg him to come over;
Bid him prepare himself for evil,
And bring his books to lay the devil."

Meanwhile Andrew,
Sometimes scolding, sometimes mourning,
Still kept up a perpetual churning;
His voice now sank in low lamenting,
Of his unlucky love repenting;
Now rose in louder tones and longer,
As love grew weak and wrath grew stronger;
Now madly quick, now softly serious,
Made a commotion so mysterious,
That you had thought some deadly quarrel
Was settling in the haunted barrel.

* * * *

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"O dear Deborah, d'ye hear me,
Is ony livin' creature near me?"
* * * *
"Na; nae a word—I might as weel
Cry to a monument o' steel,
Or lippen to a lion's paw,
Or summon help frae Largo Law—
Aweel, aweel! we e'en maun dree
A' that is fore-ordained to be."
* * * *
'By this, the Reverend Dr. Dover,
In holy armour had come over;
Prepared by faith to go to battle,
With fiends, or fools, or horned cattle.
And, when he heard the amorous carle
Bumming and bubbling in the barrel—
He kindly turned the cock about,
To let the element run out;
And, when the waters were subsided,
The reverend Doctor was provided
With a strong ladder, and ascended
With caution and with courage blended—
Resolved to summon the surrender
Of Sarah's cask from its defender;
And, looking o'er the wooden battlements
On Andrew in the inner settlements,
He shouted with a lordly air
And lofty tone—"Ho! who is there?
Said Andrew, glimmering up to see—
"Whase there—whase here!—guid Sir, its me!"
"Its me—its thee! and what art thou
That dared to raise up such a row?"
"Hoot, Doctor; wusht! mak' nae profession;
Ye ken the members o' the Session:—
Yer ruling elder claims assistance,
An' charity forbids resistance.

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Ye ken me noo, ye ken my worth—
Come, bear a hand, an' help me forth."
Come, bear a hand, an' help me forth."
'The merits of the good divine
Demand at least a faithful line;
For he exerted strength and reason,
To rescue Andrew from his prison;
And risked his life in lith and limb,
By struggling o'er the barrel's brim.

'Know then, the elder did inherit
By birthright a most patient spirit;
And tho' he'd been inclined to snarl
At his dear mistress in the barrel,
He was no sooner out of danger,
Than Love returned like an avenger;
And he had neither peace nor rest,
Till his contrition was confessed;
And, ere a fortnight had passed over,
His kind deliverer Dr. Dover
Was called upon, and came to eke
Deborah Dumps to Andrew Breek.'

The preceding piece I have given, about one half abbreviated, from a small manuscript volume of poems by John Bethune, entitled, 'Pictures of Poverty,' which the reader of his Life will recollect being mentioned there. I give it as supplying an important element, indispensable in order to form a just estimate of John Bethune's mental character. The sense of the ludicrous is a susceptibility of the higher order of minds, those of the poetic temperament especially, which gives to their movements and exercises a graceful flexibility and range; and which, when under proper discipline and control, contributes, perhaps, more than any other, to the highest measure of refinement.

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I am also tempted to give some excerpts from a piece in the same volume entitled 'Johnny Craigie's Wedding,' particularly the 'gathering,' which, for distinct and graphic portraiture, has rarely been exceeded:—

* * 'Johnny
* * Was a fiddler good and gay,
And had been from his earliest day.
* * *
'Mid music Johnny passed his life,—
His fiddle was his friend and wife;
He'd played at many a harvest feast
In Scotia's isle from west to east;
Had seen the smiles of ladies bonny,—
But nought could move the heart of Johnny—
Nor maid, nor widow, high nor low,
To him seemed worth his fiddle-bow.
But Time, that old officious meddler,
At length o'ercame the hardy fiddler;
And, waggling thro' this world of trouble,
His legs began to fold and double;
But, when they fairly failed to move,
Then Johnny turned his heart to love,
And courted Maggy i' the glen,
A stately dame of five-feet-ten.
'Maggy, in forty years of life,
Was thrice a bride, and thrice a wife;
And thrice in weeds of blackest hue,
Had wept the old and won the new.
* * * *
Thro' walls that have been often breached,
The citadel is easy reached:
Thus Maggy, unprepared for siege,
Conducted by experienced age,

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After an hour of strong temptation,
Made fair and full capitulation.
'The day was set and trusty pages
Sent forth to summon in the lieges.
* * * *
'All he loved or knew were bidden
To dance at his propitious weddin';
And when the appointed morn of pride
Arose on Johnny and his bride,
On every road a lengthened train
Was seen approaching Maggy's glen:
Shepherds from neighbouring hills arrayed
In bonnet blue, and tartan plaid,
With country lasses from the farm,
Came gaily laughing arm in arm;
With these appeared in moleskin jackets,
And shoon well shod with iron tackets,
With fustain breeks, and furrowed stockings,
A host of ploughmen from their yokings;
And with each gallant in the throng
A buxom maiden bounced along,
With ribboned hair, and muslin gown,
Which gaily swept the gowany down.
Sailors rejoicing in the sport,
Came flocking from the neighbouring port,
In canvass trousers tightly braced
Around each much diminished waist;
And giggling girls from Borough bowers,
In bonnets graced with knots and flowers,
With flapping shawl, and flowing veil
Came scudding on before the gale.
From reeky Frantlam's crowded streets
Weavers appeared in troops and fleets,
Their dingy night-caps red and blue,
Thrown by for hats of blackest hue,

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Gave an appearance brisk and smart
To each bold youngster's upper part;
With these, their pirn-winders drest
And dizzened in their very best,
Glad to escape from swifts and wheels,
To rax their limbs in rustic reels,
Came featly forth and thronged the road,
Altho' it was both long and broad.
Tinkers poured forth from camps and tents,
Where they had lodged on moors and bents,
And gaily left unclouted kettles,
Forgotten 'mid unmelted metals,
With grim but friendly smiles to cheer
The fiddler's feast, and taste his beer.
Gay beggars, lame and lyart-headed,
Who long for charity had pleaded
With success good and bad by turns,
Came limping o'er the dykes and burns.
Pipers, who in his early tours
Had spent with him delightful hours
In barn, and byre, and stable-loft,
Where they had nestled warm and soft,
In solemn droves, were seen to saunter,
With ribbands at each drone and chanter.
Fiddlers of all degrees and stations,
Of various languages and nations,
Hibernian, English, Welsh, and Scottish;
Some young and gay, some old and sottish;
From the street bowman blind and lame,
To minstrel of reputed fame,—
Some richly dressed, some scuffed and bare,
A motley crew were gathering there.
The gentle violiners, whose faces
Seemed formed for manners, smiles, and graces,
Who bore their instruments of noise,

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Which churls of ruder garb and mien
Flung o'er their backs in bags of green,
And bounced along with boast and bluster
To mingle in the general muster.
* * * *
'And when the day again was done
The sport seem'd only but begun;
And Morning from her misty cloud
Looked on an undiminished crowd,
For gentle strangers came and went,
Like pilgrims to a prophet's tent.
'Maggy like antelope or izard,
Or ape bedeck'd with mortal vizard,
Led up the dance with bounding feet,
Which hourly seem'd to grow more fleet;
While crazy Johnny sat and gazed,
And bit his lip and glibly praised,—
Till, overcome by love and transport,
He too gat up to try a dance for't,
With youthful air flung down his fiddle,
And seized his pike-staff by the middle,
Firmly resolved that all should see
His strength and his agility.
'His guests came round him in a ring,
As courtiers gather round their king,
Tho' not to rev'rence but to laugh
At the poor hero of the staff.
Johnny inflamed by love and pride
Stood stoutly to his bounding bride,
And bravely strove his feet to move—
But both denied the call of love.
Yet he had no prevailing notion
To stand while all around was motion;
Inspired by Maggy's peerless charms—
Maugre his feet, he waved his arms

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Forgetful of the staff—Alas!
That such a doom should come to pass—
That motion of unbounded mirth
Brought Johnny headlong to the earth!
The falling staff with fearful blow
Shivered the chief musician's bow;
And there was worse and greater wreck,
For Johnny fairly broke his neck!—
And mirth, and dance, and music failing
The bridal shout was changed for wailing,
For sorrow poured from every quarter,
On the poor matrimonial martyr,

* * *

Who left his Maggy but the dead
To fill her widowed bridal-bed.
'Thus ends my tale. The crowd departed—
I will not say, half broken-hearted.—
But Johnny's death affords a moral
To every time-worn amorous carle,
Whose wanton eyes begin to rove,
When his stiff limbs refuse to move.'

No. III.

'THE SISTERS.'

THE scene is laid on the margin of a lake or loch. The hero of the tale is the son of a considerable farmer, who relates the story in the first person. When a boy in his seventeenth year, he is sent by his father to tend cows by the side of the loch. In that capacity his love of natural scenery is indulged and fed. By and by he becomes acquainted with four daughters of a small farmer whose possession lies at the top of one of the glens which shoot out from the loch. These he met with frequently by the loch, to which they brought their

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washings; and he was invited by them to go up to their father's house and get a drink when he was thirsty, or warm himself when he was cold—invitations which soon he became anxious to take the full benefit of. It was in the month of August, the day after their great annual washing; and the four daughters of Andrew Marshall, Helen, Jane, Mary, and Ann had brought their clothes to bleach on the verge of the loch.—'The various articles had been spread out upon the grass, and *watered;* and my cows had sought shelter from the heat in the most cool and shady part of the Den, from which they seemed unwilling again to venture forth, so that I was almost at liberty to go where I pleased. We had sauntered for a while along the margin of the loch—sometimes picking up what we considered a beautiful pebble, and examining its colours; and sometimes gazing at the shoals of fishes, which, owing to the stillness and transparency of the water, we could see almost as distinctly as if they had been on dry land—when Mary's eye caught a water-lily which, by some accident, had been detached from its stem, floating within arm's length of the shore, a few yards beyond us; and, deeming it a treasure, she started off to secure it for herself. But Jane, whose eye had also fallen upon the aquatic beauty, started at the same moment, and, outstripping her, snatched the flower and held it up in triumph. At this the other seemed to feel both ashamed and disappointed—ashamed, as I fancied, at being outdone in the race; but for her disappointment I could not then account, though I have since learned the cause of it. Trifling as was the loss she had sustained, her gaiety for the time was gone; her feelings seemed to communicate themselves to me by some mysterious agency; and to com-

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fort her and myself, and restore cheerfulness to the company, I promised to swim to the place where they grew, and bring her at least a dozen of water-lilies, the first time I bathed in the loch.' A boat was upon the loch: some suggested that they should take it and have a sail in order that they might more easily obtain a collection of the water-lilies.—'Each had selected what she deemed a sufficient quantity; and I was beginning to pull toward the shore, when Mary descried one with a particularly large chalice, and eager, as it appeared, to outdo her sisters in the selection, she requested me to pull up to it. I endeavoured to comply, and she took her place a-head to be ready to snatch it up in passing; but, when we were within a few yards of it, Jane, from a wish to make sport, laid hold of one of the oars, and, dipping it in the water, continued to laugh and to hold it there in spite of my efforts to the contrary. This gave an unexpected turn to our little vessel; a fresh breeze had also sprung up from the south-west; and from these causes operating together, the boat fell to leeward of the object upon which I had been directing it.

'"Jane! Jane!" cried Mary, in a half-humourous, half expostulating tone, "what are you doin'? But, nae, matter; I'll get it yet." With these words she bent over the boat's side to snatch the flower; but it was more distant than in her eager haste she had anticipated, and, losing her balance in her endeavour to reach it, she plunged in, and, with a bubbling cry, disappeared. All was now terror and confusion. Shrill screams and convulsive sobs, mingling with frantic cries for help, formed a scene which I cannot describe. But these cries were vain: no one was within hearing. Poor Jane wrung her her hands, and *literally* tore her hair, and would have

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leapt into the water after her sister, had not Helen prevented her. Guided by a sort of instinct, and almost unconscious of what I did, I dropped the anchor to prevent the boat from drifting away, threw off my coat and bonnet—my shoes were already off—and plunged in as near the place where she disappeared as I could guess.'

By desperate struggles and exertions he succeeded in bringing her to the shore.—'From that day, as often as circumstances would permit, I was a visiter at Robert Marshall's; and, though the whole of the sisters received me as a brother, they now seemed to understand that it was Mary who brought me there, and that she had a sort of exclusive right to my company. In eight or ten days, with the exception of a slight cough, she was almost well again; and if at any time she chanced to be out when I arrived, Jane was always the first to go and call her in.'

The amusements of harvest-home and the spells of Hallowe'en in which he and Mary had their share and of various omen, are then described at length. His visits to Robert Marshall's were, however, any thing but grateful to his father; and, on the latter evening, he continues, 'Katty Allan, accompanied by the *herd-laddie*, "to keep the bogles from her," as she said, came running in to tell me that my father had returned, and wished to see me immediately. With a thrilling sense of disappointment I bade the rest of the company good night. But, as I shook hands with Mary, my heart forboded something; and to her I felt as if I should have said *farewell;* but the words were choking in my throat, and, without uttering another syllable, I followed Katty to the door.

'When I got home, my father did not, as I had expected, upbraid me with my absence, and insist on knowing

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the cause of it: on the contrary, he seemed to take no notice of my confusion; but began to tell me, in calm, clear, distinct, tones, that he had been, for some time past, using all his influence with a friend in London to procure me a situation in the service of the East India Company—that he had, during his late journey, received a letter from his friend, informing him of the situation being now open, and that my utmost expedition would be necessary in making preparations for my departure, as I must go off on the day after to-morrow. To me his words were an earthquake which at once shook down all those castles I had been busy building in the air. But what could I do? Had I been a year or two older, perhaps I might have disputed his authority, and claimed the privilege of disposing of myself; but, hitherto, I had been accustomed to implicit obedience, and I knew not how to disobey.

'My little preparations were soon made; and on the evening of the following day, when it grew dark, I took my pocket bible, upon a blank leaf of which I had previously written the words, *Mary Marshall*, under my own name, and hastened to Denhead to take a long farewell of my friends there. I opened the door for myself, and walked in without any ceremony; but before I could salute them, Mrs. Marshall made a sign for me to be silent; then rising to receive me, she pointed to an empty chair—the one which Mary usually occupied—and I took possession of it without speaking. I was now told in whispers, that in less than an hour after I left them, Mary began to complain of noise in her ears and pain in her head. Symptoms of very severe cold were soon evident, and these were followed by fever, the common accompaniment of such cases. During the night, she had slept

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morning she had spoken rather incoher-
none ; toward was now lying seriously ill in the other end
ently, and she
of the house.

"'' We heard this forenoon," continued her mother,
that you are going off to India directly ; but this we have
kept a secret——I fear it would break her
heart, an' we might soon get her to bury. I can guess
your errand," she added, after wiping away a tear, and
looking me full in the face as she spoke ; " I can guess
your errand ; but if ye hae ony regard for her faither an'
her mither, or ony affection for hersel', I conjure you
not to think of seeing her the nicht."

'I would have spoken, but my heart was too full to
allow one word to escape. * * * * *

'" Ah, Davy, Davy," she continued, " I fear she'll
think on you lang, lang after ye've forgotten her. But
if ye hae ony little keepsake that ye wad like to leave, or
onything that ye wad like to say, ye may intrust it to me
as ye wad do to your best friend."

'I drew the bible from my pocket—it was the only thing
I had on earth which I could offer—and, opening it at
the place where our names were written, I held it out to
her.

'" That's a guid lad, indeed," said she. " May neither
her nor you ever lack the comfort contained in that book.
And noo," she continued, her voice faltering with kind
emotion, " though it may look ill in me, I maun e'en
advise ye no to stay owre lang the nicht. Your comin'
here is maybe the cause o' your gaun awa—at least the
fo'k says sae—an' if ye were to offend your faither again,
wha kens what micht be the consequences ?"

'My heart acknowledged the justness of this observa-
tion. I rose, said something about never forgetting them,
shook hands with the sister, trying to articulate the words,

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farewell, *Helen*—*farewell*, *Jane*—and *farewell*, *Ann*: it was all I could say. Each shed a tear as she dropped my hand, and they all rose to follow me; but their mother made a sign for them to sit down again, while she herself accompanied me out. When we were beyond hearing—

'"Davy," said she, "ye're gaun far, far frae hame, and God alone kens what may happen afore ye come back, or what ye may hae to encounter; but mind what the guidman said to you on the *maiden nicht*, an' *never despair*. Though I'm auld noo, I was aince young—I ken the trials that young fo'k meet wi'; an' I ken too that young fo'k's minds are subject to a hantle changes, an' that Mary, puir thing, is nae match for you. But for a' that, ye may maybe come back an' marry her, an' maybe no; but in this, as in every ither thing, I maun just say, *the Lord's will be done*. He only kens if ever I may see you again, an' that gars me speak mair freely. Ye may forget baith her an' me; but if I'm no far mista'en, she'll no soon forget you. And noo there's my hand in token, that whaurever your lot be cast, ye'll never want a warm friend in Jennet Marshall, as lang as she lives."

'I endeavoured to thank the kind matron for her advice and care over me; but must have failed, I suppose, for she pressing my hand, said "she knew what I would say if I could speak," gave me an encouraging clap upon the shoulder, and, "wishing that God might be my guide," bade me "farewell."

'I did not, however, immediately return home. A thought had struck me while in the house. I could not leave the place without seeing Mary once more. The apartment where she lay was lighted from a back window, where I was not likely to be discovered; and there I took

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my stand, to wait till some one should enter the room with a light. Her mother soon came to inquire "how she was?" and then I saw her raise herself upon her elbow, and pass her hand across her brow. I saw the flush of fever on her cheek, and its fire in her eye. I heard her try her voice; but it was not till the second or third attempt that she could articulate; and then, instead of answering her mother's question—

'"Has Davy been here the nicht?" said she.

'"What gars ye speer that, lassie?" again inquired the other, evidently wishing to avoid an explanation.

'"I thought I heard his foot gang past the end of the house!" was her reply; "an' I'm maist sure he's been here, whether he cam' in or no."

'"Ye've surely been dreamin', lassie," said her mother; "what difference can there be between *his* foot and ony ither body's?"

'"There's juist that difference," rejoined she, "that I would ken *it* among a hunder."

'I could hear no more. These words had melted my heart; and, stepping back a little, I shed a flood of tears—the first I had shed since I was a mere boy; and with one exception, which yet remains to be mentioned, they were the last. For hours after the light was gone, I stood there on a dark, stormy, winter night, listening to try if I could hear her oppressed breathing—a vain effort amidst the howling of the wind, and the rattling of the rain. How I left the place, or how I got home, I cannot tell, but next morning I was on my way to the coast.'

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